

A STUDY OF POPULAR DISTURBANCES IN BRITAIN

1714 - 1754.

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by

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PART I

I CORN RIOTS

The period 1714-54 may justly be regarded as a Golden Age for English land holders, farmers, corn dealers, and merchants. It was an age when England for the only time in its history became a corn exporting nation. Harvests were, with the exception of two periods 1728-9 and 1740-1, good and normally there was a surplus available for exportation. A ready market existed in a Continent suffering from the ravages of war and disease and, together with the Baltic countries, England became the granary of Europe.¹ The exporter was encouraged by a Bounty established in 1689. This amounted to a payment of 5/-, 3/6, and 2/6 per quarter on wheat, rye and barley respectively and exportation was permitted provided that prices in the area of export did not exceed 48/-, 32/- and 24/- a quarter. There was little control over the actions of exporters. The Whig governments after 1714 encouraged exportation as a necessary counter to the land tax,² and the justices of the peace, who were the effective controlling authority, were frequently themselves interested in corn exportation. The exporter had, therefore/

¹ Westerfield R.B. The Middleman in English Business p. 161

² Cunningham W. Growth of English Industry and Commerce, Vol. II
p. 541

therefore, a very free hand. The development of the export trade is illustrated by the following figures:-¹

In 1662 corn exports were estimated to be worth	£ 4,315
1669	£ 2,011
Over the period 1669-1710	£ 274,141
1744-1748	£1,600,000

At the same time the importation of corn was virtually forbidden by the imposition of heavy duties.

With such emphasis on exportation, it is not surprising that in periods of scarcity the needy consumer blamed the corn exporter and that resentment sometimes found expression in rioting. Such was the case in 1728, 1729, 1737, 1740 and 1753. Riots during these years were, with the exception of those taking place in 1740, confined to small areas and easily suppressed; in 1740 rioting was so widespread that action was forced on an otherwise passive government.

Rioting in 1728 and 1729

Early in 1728 the tinnerns of Cornwall, exasperated by the shortage of corn, wandered around the countryside in mobs. Twice they raided corn cellars in Falmouth. The Mayor, John Pye, wrote to Richard Edgecumbe,² Member of Parliament for Plympton/

¹ Taken from Barnes D.G.: A History of the English Corn Laws, Ch. I.
² Mayor of Falmouth to Richard Edgecumbe, undated. S.P. Dom 36/4.

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Plympton and a man of repute with the government, asking that a description of the state of affairs at Falmouth might be laid before the Secretary of State. The only military force protecting Falmouth was that quartered at Pendennis Castle under Captain Massey. Most of Massey's soldiers were sick men and the magistrates were unable to apprehend rioters without military aid. Their obvious weakness had been in itself an encouragement to the rioters. Pye continued: "The occasion of these outrages was at first by suggestion in itself in all probability false, and their behaviour since proves that they were not in want of it, but they only make it a pretence of committing these outrages, for many, nay, it may be said, even most of those who carried off the corn we are well informed either gave it away or disposed of it to any that would buy it for quarter price." ¹ The "suggestion in itself in all probability false" was undoubtedly that corn was being hoarded prior to exportation. On the other hand, there was enough truth in the rumour for Pye himself to suggest that rioting would cease immediately if corn exportation could be suspended for a while. Edgumbe at once forwarded Pye's letter to the Duke of Newcastle who ordered the Secretary at War to see to it that troops were moved quickly to Falmouth to be placed/

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placed under Edgcumbe's command.

In May, 1728, there was a threat of a second attack on Falmouth. A rope maker named Sylvester Peebles informed Pye that he had done business with three tanners who had declared that unless a sufficient quantity of corn was brought to Redruth market on the following Friday the whole body of tanners meant to rise and attack Falmouth.² Pye again appealed to Edgcumbe for help, and three days later a detachment of sixty soldiers arrived followed shortly afterwards by a second of forty-eight. The subsequent appearance of the man-of-war "Gosport" in Falmouth harbour completely terrified the tanners, and there were no riots. Pye, however, thought it wise to ask that sixty men might be permanently stationed at Falmouth. In February and March 1729 the tanners again roamed the countryside of Cornwall searching for corn. The magistrates and gentlemen of the county petitioned the Secretaries of State, the Duke of Newcastle and Viscount Townshend, that a Royal Proclamation be issued for the capture of notorious rioters and/

¹ Duke of Newcastle to the Secretary at War, January 11, 1728.
S.P. Dom 36/5.
Mayor of Falmouth's letter of thanks to the Duke of Newcastle,
undated. S.P. Dom 36/4.

² Information sent to the Duke of Newcastle by the Mayor of Falmouth,
May 13, 1738. S.P. Dom 36/6.

and for the gathering of evidence.¹ Such a Proclamation was
issued immediately,² and with the advent of a stronger military
force the rioting ceased.

Apart from Cornwall, there was trouble in North Wales in
1728 and 1729. Here a corn dealer of Bodgedwidd named
Thomas Owen had aroused the anger of the populace by shipping
corn to a Warrington merchant. In May, 1728 one of Owen's
ships was attacked as it lay in the Menai Straits and Owen
himself was threatened. On February 22, 1729, a party of
Carnarvon men crossed to Aberffraw, boarded another of Owen's
vessels laden with corn and carried off the mainsail. On
the following night they returned and towed the vessel across
to Carnarvon. The corn was removed and distributed, and the
master of the ship restored to his command. He attempted to
obtain help from the local magistrate, Roland Wynne, but found
that Wynne sympathised fully with the rioters and refused to
act.³ The affair thus petered out.

Rioting in 1737/

¹ The Petition of the Magistrates and Gentlemen of Cornwall.
Newcastle Papers. B. Mus. Add. Mss. 32687 ff562.

² Royal Proclamation 26 March, 1729. S.P. Dom. 36/10.

³ Affidavit of Thomas Owen together with instructions by the Duke
of Newcastle, undated. S.P. Dom. 36/11.

Rioting in 1737

On September 18, 1737, the Mayor of Falmouth, Robert Gilmerden, wrote to Newcastle asking ¹ that a forty-gun ship might be sent immediately to the town together with forty soldiers from the number already quartered in Cornwall to suppress smuggling. Gilmerden enclosed a letter from one John Hicks at Truro to John Pye, merchant of Falmouth and Mayor during the 1728 riots. "I am told," the letter went, "you have bought up a large quantity of corn lately, which has been the means of raising the price of corn to such a degree, as to incense the tinnners so much against you and your family that I am credibly informed no less than a thousand of them will be with you tomorrow early: they are first to assemble at Chacewater and then proceed for Falmouth. This I am told was publicly declared at Redruth market last Friday (not but that I've heard it reported before that the Tinnners were going to pay you a visit) and perhaps it has reached your ears before now." Gilmerden, at the foot of his own letter, added that the price of wheat at Falmouth was 26/- to 27/- a quarter, which was, in his opinion, a very reasonable price. Certainly prices generally were considerably lower in 1738 than in 1728 at the time of the first riots at Falmouth. According to Barnes D.G. (A History of the English Corn/

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Corn Laws: Appendix III), the prices at Eton and Oxford, together with Tooke's estimated averages for the two years were:-

	<u>Eton</u>	<u>Oxford</u>	<u>Tooke's Average</u>
1728	49/11	51/3	48/3 $\frac{1}{2}$
1738	32/5	20/9	31/6 $\frac{3}{4}$

On September 19th, Pye wrote to the London merchants,
¹
 Rolfe^y and Wood, with whom he was doing business, to inform them of Gilmerden's letter to Newcastle. He had himself contacted Edg^ecumbe "one of His Majesty's most honourable Privy Council now at his seat in the eastern part of this county", begging him to order the Customs authorities to send soldiers to Falmouth. Pye had that morning received news that a mob was on its way. A determined body of townspeople at Penryn, two miles from Falmouth, had fired on the rioters who numbered only a hundred or so and had driven them away. Pye himself had organised a guard of the Falmouth townspeople and informed Rolfe^y and Wood that they would have to bear the expense of this guard in an increase in the price of corn supplied to them/

¹
 Pye to Messrs. Rolfe^y and Wood, Sept. 19th, 1737. S.P. Dom. 36/42.

them. He thought, however, that they would acknowledge that this was only fair, as otherwise there was a possibility that the stocks of corn might be entirely lost. There were 250 quarters at Falmouth, 310 at Padstow and 100 at Hilford.

A second attack on Penryn took place later on September 19 when a mob of four hundred tinnerns attacked the warehouse of a merchant named Guide.¹ An Ensign and twenty men arrived from Pendennis Castle to protect the town. This marked the end of the rioting which had, in fact, never had a chance of spreading because of the presence of numbers of soldiers in Cornwall attempting to check the smuggling rampant there. On the advice of the Corporation of Penryn, Guide wrote to Newcastle on September 19 and 22 describing the attacks on his cellars and enclosing affidavits against certain rioters.² A Proclamation was issued early in October for the apprehension of the accused and a reward of £50 promised for information leading to the successful prosecution of a rioter.³

Concerning/

¹ Daily Post, September 28, 1737. 5631.

² Newcastle Papers. Br. Mus. Add. Mss. 36690 ff 479.

³ Daily Post, October 14, 1737. 5645.

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Concerning these riots Edmund Prideaux, a Padstow
magistrate wrote ¹ to Newcastle as follows: "This County
being for the most part surrounded by the sea, and there being
many convenient ports for the exportation of the commodities
of it the tanners about ten years ago rose on account of the
exportation of corn and as there is a like demand for it now,
we are threatened again by them, and the alarm of it has put
the most considerable traders as well as others in this place
under great apprehensions of being plundered by them." This
would seem to indicate that normally Cornwall was not a corn
exporting county and that the demand for corn by London
merchants only extended as far as Cornwall when corn districts
nearer London had failed to satisfy the city's enormous demand.
The tanners were fighting, in fact, against a practice which
did not normally take place but which, in times of generally
poor harvests, tended to bring them dangerously near the
starvation level.

Rioting in 1740

The winter of 1739-40 was a desperately bitter one and,
following the poor harvest of 1739, occasioned a crop of
rumours that there was going to be a severe corn shortage.
These/

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E. Prideaux to Duke of Newcastle, September 20, 1737.
S.P. Dom 36/42.



CORN RIOTING, CORN PRODUCING AREAS
 AND
 CORN EXPORTING PORTS 1714-54

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These rumours were widespread and became common in March, 1740.
Some London newspapers¹ attempted to argue that there was no shortage and decried the rumours as being instigated by corn engrossers who hoped to put up the price of corn. Unfortunately the rumours were based on fact, and attempts during the summer of 1740 to continue exportation of corn from areas already short of supplies led to a prolonged series of riots.

Dewsbury

At the end of April, 1740 about 400 men and women assembled at the beat of the drum "with design to prevent any corn ground into meal or flower being carried by badgers and such dealers² from these parts westwards and into Lancashire." The mob attacked the mill at Dewsbury, broke down the doors, carried away as much of the corn as they could and scattered the rest on the roadside. The same happened at Thornhill Mill. On their return to Dewsbury the rioters were met by Sir Jonathan Kaye, the local magistrate, who attempted to reason with the rioters and to show them the error of their ways. The mob leaders claimed that the exporting of corn was causing a local scarcity/

¹
e.g. The Craftsman, May 31, 1740.
The Daily Post, May 12, 1740.

²
Magistrates of Wakefield to Duke of Newcastle, April 30, 1740.
S.P. Dom 36/50.

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scarcity, and refused to disperse. Kaye therefore had the Proclamation read, but eventually pacified the mob by promising to arrange a meeting on the following morning with the neighbouring justices so that the rioters' grounds for complaint might be fairly examined. At five o'clock on the following morning a mob of about a thousand came to Kaye's house, stayed there a while and then advanced on a mill at High Hoyland where they injured a miller and removed vast quantities of corn. While this was happening, Kaye and a fellow magistrate, Burton, sent an express letter to the Commanding Officer of General Birell's Regiment quartered at York asking for such help as could be spared. A hundred soldiers arrived at four o'clock in the afternoon to find the mob attacking the barn of a corn merchant Pollard. The latter had fired on the mob several times with such good effect that the rioters were already breaking up as the soldiers arrived. Five prisoners were taken and removed to Wakefield Jail. On the following morning the mob again rose and appeared outside the Jail, informing the magistrate Burton that they had come to release the prisoners. The soldiers had to disperse the mob, and this marked the end of rioting at Dewsbury. The prisoners were convicted at York/

York Assizes and sentenced to transportation.¹

Stockton, Sunderland and Newcastle

On May 23, John Hedworth and George Vane, two justices of the peace for the county of Durham, reported rioting at Stockton to the Duke of Newcastle.² As the rioting still continued on May 27 they journeyed to Stockton to make a full enquiry into the disturbances. They were accompanied by the servant of the High Sheriff, Sir William Williamson who was himself too ill to attend,³ and by the Durham Bailiffs. On their way they met an old woman carrying a horn who said she was going to Norton to raise the mob there. The Bailiffs removed the horn, where-upon the woman followed the party into Stockton and with much profane language attempted to incite the people of Stockton to rise and attack the magistrates. The latter ordered her to be apprehended, and a crowd of would-be rescuers immediately sprang up on all sides. However, the mob listened to the magistrates' advice and dispersed. Hedworth and Vane conferred with some of the leading gentlemen of/

¹ Newcastle Papers. B. Mus. Add. Mss. 32695. Vol. IX ff 590.
² Messrs. Hedworth and Vane to the Duke of Newcastle, May 23, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50.
³ Edward Goddard, servant, to Sir W. Williamson, May 27, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50.

of Stockton and on their testimony ordered several rioters to be apprehended. These were thoroughly frightened, gave promises of better behaviour in the future, and were released with cautions. Nevertheless, as soon as the magistrates left the town, trouble began again. Together with mobs from Norton, Billingham and Wooton, the Stockton mob roamed the country-side uttering threats against exporters of corn. The situation was analysed by Williamson in a letter to the Bishop of Durham, Custos Rotulorum for the county.¹ "The very indifferent crop last year, the severe winter following, and the melancholy prospect we have of any crops this Spring are things that greatly affect everybody but especially the labouring part of man-kind. Wheat, my servant told me is this day at Durham six shillings a bushel and oats two shillings and sixpence a bushel The Collector of Sunderland told me about three weeks ago there were then five hundred ships less in number (that had been cleared) than they usually were at that time of the year." Williamson went on to say that the Bailiff of Stockton had assured him that the granaries of the corn merchants were full and he feared that the mob would/

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Sir W. Williamson to the Bishop of Durham, May 24, 1740.
S.P. Dom 36/50.

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would soon rise again. The visit of Hedworth and Vane to Stockton had merely proved that reasoning was of no avail, and the situation could only effectively be dealt with by a military force.

Williamson's expectations of another rising were fulfilled when a Stockton mob on June 6 attacked a vessel, "The Francis and Mary", belonging to a corn merchant Barker.¹ The rioters, mainly women, boarded the ship where it lay alongside Atkinson's Quay at Yarm, fully laden with corn intended for Amsterdam, broke open the hatches and unloaded the cargo. Barker tried to oppose the mob and was lucky to escape with a ducking. Later in the day he was jostled by the mob outside his home and informed that he was little better than a rebel. A labourer of Great Ayscliff, George Bell, who seemed to be the leader of the mob, swore that unless Barker sold the corn in his granary at three shillings per bushel the mob would seize it. On June 8th, a detachment of Brigadier General Howard's Regiment stationed at Berwick arrived, but as this consisted of only seventy men, the mob paid no attention and, joined by colliers from Elderly and Caterhorn/

¹ Information taken before Vane and Surtees, 13 June, 1740.
S.P. Dom 36/50.

Caterhorn, again roamed the country-side. Hedworth and a fellow justice, Davison, attempted to disperse the rioters with the help of the soldiers but the officer-in-charge being doubtful of his authority refused to act. Hedworth realised that the mob could be persuaded to disperse if the merchants of Stockton would promise to stop exporting corn. Despite his arguments, however, these merchants refused to make any such promise, and Hedworth saw as his one remaining solution the raising of the posse comitatus; he ordered Williamson as High Sheriff to take the necessary steps.¹ On Friday, June 13th, the posse marched from Sedgerfield into Stockton, restored peace and order there and saw to the loading of² 1,200 bushels of corn.

On June 14th a riot broke out in Durham itself. The country folk came into the city in a body offering eight shillings per bushel of corn. Finding this offer refused by the corn merchants, they stormed the granaries and forcibly removed large stocks of corn.³ Six days later Hedworth/

¹ The Daily Post, June 21, 1740. 6486.
² For the story of the raising of the Posse, See Chapter IV, Part II on 'The Sheriff and the Posse Comitatus.'
³ The Newcastle Journal, Saturday June 21st, 1740. No. 64. The Daily Post, June 25, 1740. 6489.

Hedworth wrote to the Bishop of Durham suggesting that half a regiment should be sent immediately to Durham in view of the great riot that had broken out at Newcastle the day before, and of the rumours of expected riots at Sunderland. The Sunderland riots were in fact taking place as he wrote, and continued on a small scale for several days. The mob there attacked the corn loft of a merchant Smith, found no corn, and visited other granaries belonging to merchants Scudfield and Coulson, both of whom were severely beaten.¹ Hedworth and Bowes immediately hastened to Sunderland and put an end, for the time being, to the rioting by forbidding all exportation and by distributing corn to the poor at three shillings per bushel.² Nevertheless, riots again broke out and, on the 23rd June twenty prominent townsfolk of Sunderland wrote to Hedworth begging the assistance of two companies of Foot.³ By this time, however, the whole of the magistrates' attention was focussed on Newcastle.

Here rioting had started on the 19th, when colliers from neighbouring/

¹ Fairliss Smith, Corn Merchant, to Hedworth. 20th June 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

² The Newcastle Journal, Saturday, June 21st, 1740. No 64.

³ Twenty citizens of Sunderland to Hedworth, June 23rd, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

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neighbouring villages had entered the town, broken into granaries and stopped wagons carrying corn on the highways. The magistrates made futile attempts to persuade the colliers to return home while the Mayor, Cuthbert Fenwicke, bargained with the leaders of the mob and the merchants over the prices of wheat, rye, and oats, which had been 7/-, 5/- and 2/6 respectively per bushel before the rioting began. The colliers offered 3/6, 2/6 and 1/3 but eventually agreed to the merchants' prices of 4/-, 3/- and 1/6.¹ The leaders of the colliers then promised that all rioting should stop and that the corn that had been seized should be brought to the Town Hall, there to be divided among the original owners.² Neither of these promises was kept.³ The colliers in fact attempted to bring out the keelmen by preventing wagons of coal reaching the river-side, while the situation was further aggravated by an ill-timed proclamation of the corn merchants on June 20th offering a reward of five pounds for information which would lead to a conviction of any rioter.⁴ The low prices/

¹ Proclamation 20th June, 1740. Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

² Mayor of Newcastle to Duke of Newcastle. June 20th, 1740.
S.P. Dom 36/51.

³ Mayor to Newcastle. 27th June, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

⁴ Advertisement. Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

prices agreed to by both merchants and colliers had the unfortunate effect of attracting numbers of country people to Newcastle, and on June 24th the Corporation issued the following Advertisement. "As the low prices at Newcastle have brought country people from far places to buy up the corn here whereby none would be left to supply the inhabitants and persons employed in the coal works upon the river Tyne, Notice thereof is hereby given that corn will not be delivered to any person unknown without a certificate weekly in writing from a fitter, staithman, or church warden of the parish expressing the quantity necessary to be so delivered."¹

A second riot occurred when Fenwicke somewhat prematurely released the posse which he had organised for the guard of the town, and which had kept watch night and day since rioting had started.² On the morning of June 26th a mob of keelmen entered the town, opened the jail doors and let out any prisoners apprehended during the riots of the past days. At noon, the mob gathered under the windows of the Guildhall where the magistrates were sitting in council. Alderman Ridley and twelve/

¹ Advertisement. 24th June, 1740. Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

² Caledonian Mercury. July 3, 1740. No. 5277.
Report of Post-Master at Newcastle to Post-Master General.
June 27, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

twelve others unfortunately went out to the mob with fire-arms and shot at the rioters, killing one man. This so infuriated the mob that it swept forward and up the stairs into the Guildhall. Fenwicke described the attack to Newcastle as follows:¹ "They obliged us to quit the place, then fell to plundering and destroying all about them. The several Benches of Justice were immediately and entirely demolished, the Town Clerk's office was broke open, and all the books, deeds, and records of the town and its courts thrown out of the windows among the mob without doors, where they were trod underfoot, torn and most of them lost and the rest defaced and made useless. The town's public Hutch or Chest was forced and plundered of all the money therein to the amount of about £1,400; many accounts and receipts destroyed and the whole building of the Guildhall, a large and beautiful fabric, was before noon rendered almost a perfect ruin. The rioters after all this mischief divided themselves into several bodies consisting of great numbers, terrifying the whole town all the day; and in the evening had actually beset a person's house/

¹ Mayor of Newcastle to Newcastle. June 27th, 1740.
S.P. Dom 36/51.

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house threatening either to burn or to pull it down when fortunately three Companies of Major-General Howard's Regiment commanded by Captain Sowles, came into the town upon their march from Berwick. * By whose care and conduct we have been delivered from the plunder and mischief there was so great reason to apprehend from the rioters in this night. The Captain offers us ~~by~~ all the assistance in his power, either by keeping guard or otherwise as consistent with the law, and the special orders he hath to obey the call of the Justices of the Peace for the County of Durham, but has not a sufficient number of men (in case he had particular orders on our behalf) to quell the mob; which though discouraged are not yet dispersed. We therefore once more humbly pray your Grace to obtain for us an order for some of His Majesty's Forces to march to our assistance with all convenient speed."

The entry of the soldiers into the town was not quite as easy as Fenwicke's description implied. The mob had heard of their approach and determined to oppose them. The two parties met outside the church of St. Nicholas. The soldiers halted, loaded their muskets, and marched at the mob which gave way slowly and eventually broke. Some forty prisoners were taken. ¹ Despite/

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Despite Fenwicke's fears, the arrival of the soldiers meant the end of rioting. Captain Sowles organised a guard of the non-freemen and, as need arose, sent for additional help to the Mayor who had organised a guard of free-men.¹ On July 19th, Major-General Howard reviewed his Regiment on the town moor, and thanked the three Companies who had marched from Berwick.² At the beginning of October the Mayor and Corporation showed their appreciation of Sowles by giving him the freedom of the City, "which is to be presented to him in a gold box that is to weigh 50 guineas... they have likewise ordered a plate of 40 guineas value to be presented to Captain Fielding, one of thirty to Ensign Hewitt, and 10 guineas each to the said Companies."³

At the Assize which ended on August 9th, seven prisoners were found guilty of feloniously taking money from the Mayor and Burgesses and sentenced to transportation for seven years.⁴

Flint/

¹ Captain Sowles to Fenwicke. July 2, 1740. Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

² Newcastle Journal, July 26th. No. 69

³ Caledonian Mercury. October 4th. No. 3207.

⁴ Caledonian Mercury. August 19th. No. 3082.
Newcastle Journal. August 16th. No. 72.
Daily Post, July 3, 1740. 6496.

Flint

On the 21st May, 1740 a mob of about four hundred people carrying clubs and stones assembled in Ruddlan and seized a wagon-load of corn intended for transportation to Liverpool by a merchant named Colley. The local magistrate, William Price, caused the Proclamation to be read, but the rioters refused to disperse until five of their fellows, apprehended in a previous scuffle on the orders of another magistrate, David Foulkes of St. Asaph, had been released.¹ This was done, but two days later an even greater mob armed with muskets, swords, and halberds broke into ware-houses, shops, and cellars destroying corn intended for export. The inhabitants were forced to give money to the mob and the magistrates, in particular Foulkes, threatened with murder.

Foulkes wished to order a warrant for the raising of the posse, but gave up the idea on the advice of his brother magistrates and of Chancellor Kenwicke of Chester.² At first, the magistrates merely applied to a Deputy Sheriff and to neighbouring/

¹ William Price, William Myddelton, David Foulkes to Newcastle, May 25th, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50.

² Foulkes to Sir George Wynne Bart. May 25th, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50.

neighbouring magistrates for help in suppressing the rioters, but as the rioters threatened to burn the town on May 26th, they had no option but to send an express letter to the Duke of Newcastle imploring military help, which was immediately granted. On the orders of Sir William ^{Yonge} George, Secretary-at-War, three detachments under Colonel Handasyd, moved on Sunday, June 1st, to Ruddlan, Flint, and Holywell. At Flint the mob, though restless, feared the soldiers too greatly to appear in numbers, and a small rising at Mold was easily suppressed. The Holywell detachment suppressed a rising at St. Asaph on June 2nd and many times quelled small outbreaks in Holywell itself. Eight prisoners were taken to Flint Castle. Ruddlan became quiet as soon as troops arrived. On June 5th a letter from Justice Pryce reporting the quelling of the riots was read before the Lords Justices while Myddelton and Foulkes of St. Asaph declared the rioters in their district suppressed by June 13th, though they thought the rioters might still cause trouble, and asked the Lords Justices to allow the troops to remain in the district at least/

¹ Reports of the Officers in charge of the three detachments to the Secretary-at-War. June 13, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50.

² Minutes of the Lords Justices, June 5, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50.

least until the rioters had been brought to justice.¹

During these riots the unfortunate Colley, together with his fellow corn merchants, Edward Williams and John Evans, had been for a time forced to seek hiding in a ditch; they were advised by friends to remain in strict concealment - the mob's threats being especially dangerous as the rioters were sober! Colley managed to persuade a ploughman to take the keys of his granary to the rioters and to inform them that they could have as much corn as they wanted at market price, and with credit for two or three months.² This proposal, naturally enough, was ignored by the mob who carried off seventy measures of oats and fifty measures of wheat. The merchant Evans identified the rioters as coal-miners coming from Mostyn, Brighton and Tredogan, and alleged that they were led by the reeves of Mostyn and Brighton.³ Colley also alleged, in a letter to a Colonel Stapleton, that the mob was led by the Agent of the coal-works of Mostyn and Brighton, and told Sir George Wynne that Sir Thomas Mostyn had deliberately/

¹ Myddelton and Foulkes to Lords Justices, June 13, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50.

² Colley to Sir George Wynne, May 25, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50.

³ Evans to Sir George Wynne, May 25, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50.

deliberately set his miners to work and furnished them with
¹
 weapons.

In the taking of examinations following the riots the examining magistrates split into two bodies. Myddelton and Foulkes had from the first voiced their suspicions of Mostyn's part in the riots,² while Sir Thomas Mostyn, Sir Thomas Longueville and William Price acted as a second and separate examining body. Myddelton and Foulkes collected statements accusing Edward Wynne, agent to Sir Thomas Mostyn, in that he readily assisted the rioters by supplying them with arms hanging in Mostyn Hall. An agricultural labourer, John Jones, stated that he had had a drink with a rioter on the day of the rioting at Ruddlan and had expressed his wonder that the colliers could plunder and steal as they did, to which the rioter merely replied "They had their orders from Sir Thomas Mostyn." (This could in fact hardly have been true since Sir Thomas was away from home during the whole period of rioting, and only returned on June 11th; at the same time, the rioters who removed the arms from Mostyn Hall certainly/

¹
 Colley to Sir George Wynne. May 25th 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50.

²
 Foulkes and Myddelton to Lords Justices. June 13th 1740.
 S.P. Dom 36/50.

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certainly did so under the impression that they were acting with the complete approval of Sir Thomas.) Further accusations in the examinations taken by Myddelton and Foulkes¹ were made against Justice Humphrey Parry of Pwllhellog. Parry had, so it was alleged, incited the miners to stop corn going to sea "to our enemies". The corn merchant John Stevenson of Dyserth had been attacked on May 26th by a mob of about 160 people who, after breaking into his home and stealing whatever food and drink they could find, forced him to go before a Justice of the Peace to swear that he would not export any quantity of corn. Stevenson declared himself willing to go before the magistrate Lloyd at Rhyl but this the rioters would not hear of as Lloyd was "not of their party"; they insisted however that Stevenson should go before Parry of Pwllhellog. Unfortunately from the historian's point of view, Parry was out when the rioters called, and an/

¹ Statements of John Boulton Jnr. }
William Pratchett } on the 9th and 10th June,
James Dowell } 1741 before David Foulkes
Reverend Price Lloyd } and W. Myddelton. S.P.Dom 36/51
John Stevenson }
John Jones }

an interview which might have proved most interesting never took place.

The informations sent up by Sir Thomas Mostyn, Sir Thomas Longueville and William Price gave general accounts of the rioting with no mention of the arms taken from Mostyn Hall.¹ John Evans, who a fortnight previously had been making² allegations against the reeves of Mostyn and Brighton, now made no mention of his suspicion. In front of Mostyn himself Evans described the mob as "Persons unknown". At the same time a carpenter at Mostyn Hall described the arrival of the mob at the Hall, "where they demanded arms of Edward Wynne the/

1

Examinations of Edward Williams,)
Innkeeper.)
Jonathan Evans,)
Clerk.)
John Goffe,)
gardener at)
Mostyn Hall.)
Thomas Price,)
yeoman.)

before Sir T. Mostyn Bart.
Sir T. Longueville Bart.
William Price Esq.
on June 11th 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51

also Edward Davies,)
Park Keeper)
at Mostyn)
Hall.)
Robert Griffiths,)
Carpenter at)
Mostyn Hall.)

before William Price Esq.
Humphrey Parry Esq.

2

Undated letter to Colonel Stapleton. S.P. Dom 36/51.

the Agent. Wynne said he had no arms for them nor could he lend them any, but told them to go to the keeper." The keeper was away and knew nothing of the matter until he discovered that eight swords, two or three halberds and one musket had been removed from the Hall. These weapons hardly constituted a formidable armoury and, in the light of reflection, the corn merchants had obviously seen fit not to repeat their previous allegations or to attempt to implicate Sir Thomas Mostyn in the rioting.

Suspensions of Mostyn and Parry had, however, been carried to the Lords Justices who commanded the trusted magistrate William Price to make an investigation of the whole affair. Price replied on June 13th that he could not find "that any one person whatever of any note or consideration was concerned in aiding or abetting those disturbances.... Upon the whole, and to the best of our judgment, we must attribute this commotion to the necessity of the people, to the sudden rise of the market (about double the usual price of corn), to the exporting great quantity of it from Ruddlan to other countries when a scarcity was felt, and to their hearing it was stopped in other parts of England from being shipped off." ¹

It/

¹ William Price, magistrate, to the Lords Justices, June 13th, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

It would seem, then, that the corn merchants were, in the heat of the riots, only too willing to believe stories about the employers of the collier rioters which were later shown to be without foundation. At the same time, it is probable that pit-owners sympathised fully with the aims of the rioters, for it could be only to their advantage to have contented and well-fed employees.

Northamptonshire

On May 19th John Creed, a magistrate of the county wrote¹ to Newcastle informing him that "several riots have been committed lately in this county on Saturday last at Peterborough and also in this town (Nottingham) which I with difficulty appeased. It arises chiefly in the corn markets; the winter has been very severe with the poor, and if the corn is not prevented from being transported we must expect further disturbances. A match of football was cried at Kettering of five hundred men of a side, but the design was to pull down ^{Lady Betty} ~~Lord Berty~~ Jermaine's mills. Mr Ward and I went thither and seized some persons and there was a guard set to prevent any mischief. The troop was drawn out at Peterborough and/

¹

John Creed to the Duke of Newcastle, May 19th, 1740.
S.P. Dom 36/50.

and the Proclamation read by the Justices, and so the riot dispersed."

Colchester

On May 28th the Mayor of Colchester wrote ¹ to Newcastle describing the state of riot that had existed in the town for the past fortnight. The rioters were in distress because of unemployment in the woollen industry, and had attempted to prevent the exportation of corn because of the prevailing high prices - "it being apprehended that the stock left will not be sufficient to supply the wants of our own nation." The mob had already been appeased by the action of the military permanently stationed in the town, and also by a promise to the rioters that the magistrates would make a formal protestation to the Lords Justices against the exportation of corn. This was not the end of trouble at Colchester, for on June 17th a petition was sent by merchants of the town to the government begging that soldiers should be left in the town to prevent any possible fresh risings. This petition was ignored on the grounds that it was not signed by a magistrate, ² but a similar petition arrived from the Mayor and Corporation on/

1

Mayor of Colchester to Duke of Newcastle, May 28th, 1740.
S.P. Dom 36/50.

2

Minutes of the Lords Justices, June 17th, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50.

on June 23rd, who informed Newcastle¹ that fresh rioting had broken out at Manningtree, a few miles outside Colchester, and that the mob was attacking mills and granaries. This, however, was the end of the rioting.

Nottingham

At Nottingham trouble broke out in the last days of May when a number of country folk assembled in the city and threatened to pull down a corn mill at Radford, a western suburb. The magistrates requested military help of the commanding officer of the Blue Guards then stationed at Nottingham, and were sent a detachment of fifty men immediately. This dispersed the mob for that day, but on the following day they again rose threatening to destroy the Radford Mill and the County Jail. However, the continued presence of the Blue Guards prevented the realisation of these threats² and no damage was in fact done.

Wisbech

At the beginning of July the Bailiff of the Isle of Ely wrote to Charles Clarke, Member of Parliament for Ely, informing him that about sixty rioters had been taken in the recent/

¹ Mayor of Colchester and Magistrates to Newcastle, June 23rd.
S.P. Dom 36/50.

² Langford Collins to the Duke of Newcastle, June 4, 1740.
Newcastle Papers. B. Mus. Add. Mss. 32693 ff486.

recent corn riots at Wisbech and that they were to be conveyed to the Jail at Ely.¹ The Bailiff feared that the Jail would not be large enough to hold such a number, and wondered if he should apply to the Secretary at War for military assistance. "For as there really appears too much of the same discontented spirit and temper about the exportation of corn here and hereabout, and towards a rising here, we don't know what attempts may be made by the kindred or families of the people in custody ... to rescue the prisoners. Surely it has not been prudent in the Wisbech Justices to take up such a multitude of them when the seizing and making examples of the Captain, the Lieutenant and the Commodore (the leaders of the mob) would have sufficiently terrified the rest." In fact the number sixty was an exaggeration and the rioting at Wisbech had been of no great size. On June 29 a mob entered a granary at Wisbech and seized twenty-five lasts of wheat, which were sold for a penny a bushel. Shopkeepers were forced to give donations to the rioters from their tills.² Of these rioters only fourteen were convicted. These/

1

E. Parthenicke, Bailiff, to Charles Clarke, M.P.
July 5, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

2

Gentleman's Magazine, June 29, 1740. Vol. X pp. 355-356.

These, although sentenced to be executed, were with the exception of the ringleaders reprieved and transported for fourteen years. This reprieve resulted from a Petition¹ sent up by the magistrates of Wisbech to the King pleading that the rioters were ignorant and starving men, and had acted in ignorance of the law and without malice towards the government.

Norwich

On July 5th the Mayor of Norwich wrote to the Secretary-at-War asking that a party of Lord Mark Kerr's Dragoons, at present stationed at Norwich, might continue there "as we have very great reason to apprehend there may be a rising of the common people of the city under a pretence to prevent corn being sent from hence to Yarmouth to be exported."² A riot actually broke out as the letter was being written and, on the following day, the rioters broke open the prison and rescued three of their fellows.³ They proceeded from the jail to the Common Hall and hurled stones through the windows. The magistrates were eventually forced to order soldiers who were/

¹ Minutes of the Lords Justice, September 4, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

² Mayor of Norwich to Secretary-at-War, July 5, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

³ London Daily Post and General Advertiser, July 11, 1740.

Mayor of Norwich to Duke of Newcastle. July 9, 1740.

S.P. Dom 36/51.

24

were standing in front of the Hall to fire. Five people were killed, and the rioting came to an end with the arrival on July 10th of a party of Hanley's Dragoons to relieve Lord Kerr's soldiers who had been on duty without rest for three days. By the 14th, all was quiet and the Dragoons moved on to Lynn.¹

Pembroke and Carmarthen

In May, 1740, the colliers in Pembroke rioted against the exportation of local corn to Bristol. They attacked a vessel laden with corn, broke open the hatches, seized a quantity of corn and proceeded to the market where they demanded corn at their own price - though corn at Pembroke was, according to the Mayor, Jenkin Farrier, lower than anywhere in England. The magistrates were helpless before the fury of the mob and a week later, after days of indecision and vain hope that the riots would cease, Farrier appealed for military help,² which quickly arrived from Carmarthen and settled the disturbance. The corn ships were able to leave "and such care is taken by the owners of the collieries to supply/

¹ London Daily Post and General Advertiser, July 22, 1740.
Mayor of Norwich to Lords Justices. July 14th, 1740.
S.P. Dom 36/51.

² Mayor of Pembroke to Newcastle. June 17, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

supply the men with corn to keep them in order that no¹
disturbance can happen for the future."

At Carmarthen a strange situation developed when, in the latter half of July, a landowner Morgan became the centre of attacks by the local mob. Morgan wrote to the Lords Justices² imploring military aid³ which was granted on August 5th. On August 23rd, however, the Recorder of Carmarthen sent an application from a number of the burgesses and principal inhabitants begging that the soldiers recently quartered there might be speedily removed.⁴ The Recorder understood that the soldiers had been requested by "Mr Morgan, who is no magistrate nor bears any office in this Corporation; and as we have no public disturbances of the peace, I humbly desire that the inhabitants may not be burdened with quarters; for I am well assured that it may be attended with bad consequences." On the very same day the Lords Justices received the following from Morgan himself:-⁵ "I am desired by the Mayor and a majority/

¹ William Owen M.P. to Newcastle. June 17, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

² Morgan to Lords Justices. July 25, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

³ Minutes of the Lords Justices, August 5, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

⁴ Recorder Bevan to the Lords Justices, August 23, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

⁵ Morgan to the Lords Justices. August 23, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51.

majority of the Common Council to return to you their hearty thanks for the timely assistance which you was so kind as to send us. Some few nights before the soldiery arrived, the rioters repented of their injuries upon my lands, being informed that I had petitioned for some military force, but since they have appeared easy imagining to have the soldiery recalled; especially if they can procure Mr. Bevan (the Recorder) for their advocate to you, for a paper is handed about, and I am told by the ring leaders of them, to importune you on this occasion. I shall submit it to you whether you think safe to recall them when hundreds of affidavits may be sent you of their riotous proceedings in this Corporation. I am far from attempting to oppress even those that injure me, but the Mayor and Council have this day offered a reward in the papers by which means I hope some discovery may be made for the whole Corporation have suffered by those unjust proceedings." The Lords Justices were not at all interested in this local quarrel and, as the riots at Carmarthen were¹ obviously at an end, ordered the troops to be removed.

Edinburgh /

¹

Minutes of the Lords Justices. August 28th, 1740.
S.P. Dom 36/51.

Edinburgh and Leith

As early as January 21st, 1740 the magistrates at Edinburgh¹ had taken steps to relieve the distresses of the poor.

Trade was slack, the weather severe, and yeast so scarce that bakers had to give ten shillings per gallon for it. The

Town Council set aside a sum of money to be distributed to "necessitous inhabitants at this time of affliction". In

April² a vast quantity of meal was bought by the Corporation and sold out at cost price in an endeavour to reduce the high price of meal on the open market. A second quantity of

one hundred^{holls} was bought and sold at twopence under market price at the beginning of May in an effort to force the

price of meal down.³ In May, too, the magistrates, acquainted with the news of corn riots in England, took special precautions to maintain peace in the city. They continued selling grain to the poor and at frequent intervals in-

vestigated the state of corn supplies to see that corn was not⁴ being kept off the market deliberately. On September 2nd, they/

¹ Caledonian Mercury No. 3091. January 24, 1740.

² Caledonian Mercury No. 3133. April 30, 1740

³ Caledonian Mercury No. 3136. May 15, 1740.

⁴ Caledonian Mercury No. 3188. September 4, 1740.

they received four hundred bolls of meal which were used to keep the market steady. Indeed, at this time, the situation all over the country seemed to have eased, and the magistrates might well have thought their dangerous period was over. On the afternoon of October 25th, however, a riot broke out in the West Kirk Parish while most respectable citizens were at church. A mob broke open the house of a corn merchant, Charles Sawers, on the protest that he was hoarding meal at Bell Mills. The Lord Provost applied immediately to General Clayton at the Castle for military aid, and, accompanied by several magistrates, went in search of the rioters who were making their way to Leith. At Leith the magistrates, who had been informed of the approach of the mob, applied to Captain Tullikins, stationed at the Fort, for help. As the granaries in Leith were scattered, Tullikins could not split up his small force, and the rioters were able to break open lofts and cellars and to carry away one hundred and fifty bolls of oats, meal, and pease together with four hundred bolls of wheat belonging to John Clarkson. Tullikins eventually came upon the rioters and took a number prisoner. On the following day about two hundred soldiers marched from the Castle to escort these prisoners to Edinburgh but, as they made/

made their way out of Leith, were attacked by a great mob of would-be rescuers. The magistrates had the Proclamation read, but to no effect and were forced to order shots to be fired over the heads of the rioters. This also had no effect, and finally the soldiers fired into the mob killing one rioter and injuring two others. The rioters retreated out of musket range, but continued to follow the escort as it marched up the High Street to the Netherbow Port where it was met by the magistrates, constables, and officers of the trained bands. The Netherbow gate was shut in the face of the approaching mob which gave up the attack for that day, and contented themselves with the destruction of Bailie Clark's house at Gilmerton. On the following morning, however, the rioters found the Netherbow Gate open and poured into the city where they ransacked the shop of a grocer Simpson, and attacked retailers of meal in Abbeyhill, Canongate and Cowgate before returning to Leith. Troops were summoned from Dalkeith and Linlithgow, and these patrolled the City throughout the night accompanied by the firemen of the City carrying flambeaux lights. At the same time, more positive methods of restoring peace were not forgotten. A ship's load of pease/

pease and oats was bought up by the magistrates, while representatives of the Corporation travelled over the countryside seeking supplies of oats to be sold in Edinburgh at cost price. Agreements were made with farmers in the neighbouring countryside to send in as much corn as could be conveniently threshed out.¹ The attitude of the magistrates to the twenty-three prisoners, eighteen of whom were domestic servants and weavers from Leith, was most sympathetic. They were maintained at the city's expense, and by November 11th² all had been set free.

The citizens of Edinburgh insisted that the riot had been caused by Leith folk. As a correspondent of the Caledonian Mercury wrote, "a certain gentleman shall take it in hand to impeach the loyalty and peaceful disposition of the inhabitants of this City. It is true, if the rioters had got within our gate we might have become turbulent enough, and perhaps suffered by the madness of strangers, but as their fury was stemmed by the Magistrates shutting the Netherbow Port upon their noses, this can only plead a reason why that gate should still stand."³ The censure of the government/

¹ Caledonian Mercury No. 3211. October 27, 1740.
² Caledonian Mercury No. 3216. November 12, 1740.
³ Caledonian Mercury No. 3211. October 27, 1740.

government after the Porteous Riots obviously still rankled.¹

On October 28th a second attack was made on Bell Mills. The rioters searched for Sawers in order to hang him, swearing "if they had found him, he should never again deal betwixt farmer and eater, nor hoard up grain while the poor starved."² Two days later the magistrates of Edinburgh issued a public declaration defending the corn merchants of the city. "The real want of corn in this country, from the failure of the crops in 1739, having brought a great number of poor unhappy people in Edinburgh and the neighbourhood into a real distress and who, feeling their own wants, have unluckily taken those to be the authors of their misery who have contributed most towards their support. Our great corn dealers in this place, to wit, Bailie Arbuthnot, Bailie Coutts, Mr. William Hay, Mr. John Haliburton and Mr John Clarkson and others have this year brought in very large quantities of pease, oats, meal etc. from England and other places to the port of Leith, which has in a manner preserved the poor in this country from starving, and not one of these gentlemen having been in the least concerned in exporting any of the said corns, they have always regularly/

¹ See Chapter I Part II on The Magistrate.
² Caledonian Mercury No. 3213. November 1, 1740.

regularly sold off the corns as they brought them in, and under market price too The Magistrates and Town Council ..., after the strictest enquiry, are fully convinced that none of these gentlemen ever hoarded up or forestalled the market."¹

It was, however, with the greatest difficulty that the magistrates persuaded any corn dealers to bring further supplies of meal to the city, so thoroughly had they been terrified by the actions of the mob. A second proclamation² was issued on November 10th promising protection to all corn dealers bringing corn to the city, and compensation for any possible losses. Early in December, a certificate of the price of grain was sent to the Customs Commissioners who, by the advice of the King's Advocate and Solicitor, ordered the Collectors at Port Glasgow and Greenock to admit foreign corn free of duty. This of course had no immediate effect, and by December 19, with corn dealers still refusing to come near the city, the magistrates were becoming desperate. Their own agents had failed to buy corn and on the 19th an Act in Council was passed stating that "the several steps they (the Council) have already taken and which in concert with the/

¹ Edinburgh City Archives. October 30th, 1740.

² Edinburgh City Archives. Act in Council. November 10th, 1740.

the heritors of the shire they are taking for the importation of corn to prevent the increase of the dearth and the misery of the poorer sort of the people will not effectually answer the ends proposed unless the apprehensions of such persons as have been or as may think fit upon this occasion to become importers of corn into the port of Leith for the supplies of the Mercatts of this City be quieted." ¹ The Act promised, once again, compensation for any losses merchants might suffer when bringing corn into the city. Gradually supplies increased and, happily for the City fathers the state of tension eased and had ceased to be by the end of December 1740.

Rioting in 1753

Despite generally high prices in 1753, rioting was confined to an area around Bristol. The rising of the ² colliers of Kingswood is described elsewhere. There was too a riot at Shepton Mallet in Somersetshire, where shortage of corn provoked seven hundred miners to demonstrate. For a/

¹ Act in Council, December 19, 1740. Edinburgh City Records Office.

² See Chapter on "Kingswood; an area of riot."

a brief while mobs roamed the countryside forcing inn-keepers¹ and owners of granaries to sell corn at low prices.

The Action of the Government in 1740.

As has been seen, it was only in 1740 that corn riots reached a formidable and, for the government, an embarrassing height. Disturbances then were indeed so general that the government was forced to consider the whole question of corn exportation.. The absence of George II on one of his periodic visits to Hanover in 1740 means that the historian has been given the opportunity of studying the reaction of the government to these riots through the Minutes of the Council of Regency. During the month of May mobs rose at Dewsbury, Northampton, Nottingham, Stockton, Pembroke, Flint and Colchester. At the same time from the south of England came complaints that French merchants were buying up as much wheat and barley as they could find - "the greatest plot that old card Fleury ever made to bring the famine speedily upon us."² On May 29 the Lords Justices discussed the whole problem of food shortages and ordered the Attorney and Solicitor General to examine "all the Laws now in being relating to the buying or/

¹ Gentleman's Magazine 1753. Vol. XIII p. 246.

² James Stuart to the Duke of Newcastle. May 11, 1740.
Newcastle Papers. B. Mus. Add. Mss. 32693 ff 486.

or exporting of corn, and to lay a state thereof before their Excellencies with all possible speed together with their opinions what methods may lawfully be made use of to prevent the excessive exportation of corn. And that the Attorney and Solicitor General should attend their Excellencies at their next Meeting." ¹ This took place on June 3 when the Attorney General, Sir Dudley Ryder, read a statement of the existing corn laws. ² As the actual document has disappeared, the following is a survey of the Corn Laws enacted before 1740.

Before 1660 the government had, in its Corn Laws, sought to protect the consumer against the middle-man. As early as the thirteenth century a class of dealers called corn-mongers had arisen ³ and by the middle of the Sixteenth Century the activity of the middle-man had become so marked that an Act of 1552 was passed to regulate his activities. ⁴ It was this Act which first gave a definition of the practices of engrossing, forestalling and regrating. Engrossing was the act/

¹ Minutes of the Lords Justices. May 29, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50

² Minute of the Lords Justices. June 3, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/50.

³ Gras, N.S.B. : Evolution of the English Corn Market, p. 19.

⁴ See Barnes, op. cit. pp. 2 - 9.
Westerfield, op. cit. p. 143

QUARTERS

750,000

50/- PER QTR.

40/- CORN PRICES

30/-

20/-

48/- LEVEL SET UP BY THE 1689 ACT

FROM TOOK
"HISTORY OF
PRICES
VOL. I pp 387-5

FROM "CUSTOM
TARIFFS OF
THE UNITED
KINGDOM FROM
1800-1897

CORN EXPORTS

IMPORTS

RIOTING

RIOTING

RIOTING

719 724 729 734 739 744 749 754

GRAPH OF EXPORTS, IMPORTS AND CORN PRICES 1714-54, TAKEN FROM BARNES 297-300

act of buying up quantities of corn before harvest with the intention of selling again at an artificially high price; regrating meant the buying of provisions and the reselling of the same at a second market within four miles of the first, while forestalling was the act of buying up goods before they had reached a market. By the Act, too, all "badgers, laders, kidders and carriers of corn" had to be licensed by the local magistrates, and by an amending Act of 1562 the qualifications necessary for obtaining a license were that applicants had to be married, house-holders and dwellers in the county for at least three years previously. At the time of the passing¹ of this Act, the importation of corn was seldom restricted.

In 1663 the exportation or engrossing of corn was permitted when the home price of corn fell below 48/-, 28/- and 13/6 per quarter of wheat, barley and oats respectively. No license was necessary to take part in this trade, and consequently the licensing system itself ceased or continued haphazardly. Furthermore, as prices varied in each part of the country with the size of the local crop - a varying which was bound to happen with such poor transport facilities - there/

¹
See Barnes, op. cit. pp. 2 - 9
Westerfield, op. cit. p. 143.

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there was an ever-present temptation for dealers to continue the business of exporting corn even when prices had risen above the stated levels. Indeed, there was no method of determining the price of grain intended for exportation. The exporter was, in 1689, given great encouragement by the establishment of a bounty of 5/-, 3/6 and 2/6 on each quarter of wheat, rye and barley when the price at the port of ex-¹portation did not exceed 48/-, 32/- and 24/- per quarter. The importation of corn was, to all intents and purposes, prohibited by the setting up of a sliding scale. Wheat, for example, when at

53/4 was admitted with a duty of 16/-	
below 80/-	8/-
above 80/-	4d.

It was left to the magistrates in each district to determine at the Quarter Sessions after Michaelmas and Easter the prevailing market prices of middling corn and to send these prices to the chief customs officers who, with the aid of two people not interested in the corn trade but "skilful in price", would fix the duty on imported corn. This fixing of prices was/

¹
Barnes pp. 16 - 17.

was not undertaken with a view to deciding when the home prices of grain had exceeded the 1689 limits for exportation; the emphasis lay rather on the exclusion, if possible, of all foreign corn, and magistrates rarely bothered themselves with corn prices. Between 1689 and 1740 there was, in fact, little or no control over the actions of corn merchants and exporters.

On June 26th, 1740, following the news of further riots at Durham, Sunderland and Newcastle the Lords Justices issued a Proclamation¹ defining their attitude towards the problem of exportation of corn in times of scarcity. This Proclamation forbade exportation except by persons specially licensed by three Justices of the Peace and warned all customs officers that all persons bringing corn for export should be submitted to careful scrutiny and examination so that it might be determined whether they were the true owners of the corn. Justices of the Peace were ordered to enforce the 1552 Act and all others against persons guilty of forestalling, engrossing or regrating.

The Lords Justices had thus decided to deal with riots (which/

¹ Proclamation, June 26, 1740. S.P. Dom 36/51

(which common opinion had held to be due to continued exportation of corn in times of scarcity) by reviving a long-forgotten statute framed at a time when England had exported little or no corn, and which had been intended to deal with the fair circulation and sale of corn within the country. This is perhaps surprising when one remembers the recently enacted Laws dealing with the exportation of corn, for of these the Lords Justices made no mention. The justification of their policy lies partly in the fact that by restricting permission to export to licensed dealers only they had, in an age when the use of licenses had largely lapsed, virtually laid an embargo on further large-scale exportations. In this way an Act passed nearly two hundred years previously in totally different circumstances was used as an effective measure for restricting exports. Again, the application of an already existing Law was more convenient than tampering with or attempting to obstruct the later laws encouraging exportation.

Normally, indeed, the Corn Laws seem to have worked satisfactorily, with the outstanding exceptions of 1728, 1729, 1737, 1740 and 1753. In his "History of the English Corn Laws" D. G. Barnes remarks that "despite the steady increase/

increase in the export figures from 1715 to 1750 the period was not one of quiet and complacent contentment as it has been pictured so often by later writers. The old fear of starvation, with its centuries of tradition, was aroused in many parts of the country by this very exportation.¹ Again, in the same work, he wonders that "the Corn Laws did not arouse any great interest either in Parliament or in the pamphlet and periodical literature of that period."² The truth of the matter, however, would seem to be that hardship as indicated by riots occurred only at periods of corn shortage and then not universally but in marginal industrialised areas such as Durham, Flint and Cornwall. Here a sufficient quantity of corn was produced in normal times for the needs of the inhabitants, but in times of scarcity certainly not enough to satisfy both inhabitants and dealers. When one bears in mind the limited nature of the distress it does not really afford cause for wonder that contemporary interest in parliament and press concerning the corn laws was not great.

¹ History of the English Corn Laws: D.G. Barnes, pp. 12 - 13.

² Barnes, op. cit. pp. 18 - 19.

II RIOTS IN THE CLOTH INDUSTRY OF THE SOUTH WEST

It has long been recognised that trade disputes of a modern nature existed before the introduction of the factory as the working unit of industry and that the "capitalist" system with its concomitant strife between employer and employee¹ was in being before the Industrial Revolution. No better illustration of these early labour struggles could be found than that of the frequent rioting in the south-western Cloth Industry in the first half of the Eighteenth Century.

The central figure in this industry was the Clothier, an established member of the highest industrial and commercial grade in Elizabeth's time,² and at the very height of his importance between 1690 and 1760.³ More of a middleman than a manufacturer the clothier organised the distribution of raw materials, the manufacture and finishing of cloth, and the sale of cloth through factors to merchants. His relations with/

¹ See, for example, Lipson, E. Growth of the English Woollen and Worsted Industries. p. 104.

² Clapham, J. : A Concise Economic History of Britain. p. 25

³ Westerfield, R.B. : Middlemen in English Business 1660-1760 pp. 273-4.



with his workmen were essentially those of the Nineteenth Century factory owner and his hands; weavers and other cloth workers were nothing more than the paid instruments of the clothier's organisation. To the state, too, the lives of the employees had become of less value by dint of the political changes of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. In Tudor and Stuart times the government had actively intervened on behalf of artisans; the Civil War and the 1688 Revolution loosened the control of the central government on local authorities and hence on industrial conditions.¹ The clothier of the Eighteenth Century, happy in the knowledge that early legislation enabling magistrates to fix reasonable wages would not be enforced, was at liberty to make as great a profit as possible out of the exertions of his work-people.

The weavers and other workers in the wool trade did not accept this situation placidly, but sought relief through combination. This was, of course, illegal. An Act of the Sixteenth Century² forbade all craftsmen, workmen and journey-men forming alliances against their employers under penalty of a £10 fine or imprisonment for twenty days for a first offence/

¹ Lipson, op. cit. pp. 113-4.

² 2 & 3 Edward VI, c. 15.

offence ranging up to a £40 fine or the pillory and loss of one ear. The actions of the clothiers, however, and the increasing miseries of life were more compelling than such legislation, and from the early eighteenth century cloth workers in the south west joined together in embryonic trade unions. By 1700 the wool combers of Tiverton¹ had formed a friendly society with the purpose of enforcing a minimum wage² of two shillings per dozen pieces and it has been suggested that the "nomadic habits" of the combers were responsible for the general spread of the practice of combination during the years following. An indication of the growth of this movement is given by the Petitions to Parliament in 1717 from the Mayors, Corporations, and Clothiers of Bradminch, Tiverton and Exeter, wherein it was claimed that "the woolcombers and weavers in those parts have been confederating how to incorporate themselves into a club: and have to the number of some thousands in this county, in a very riotous and tumultuous manner, exacted tribute from many."³ The nature of/

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- ¹ History of Tiverton (1790): Martin Dunsford.
Webb, B & S.: History of Trades Unionism. p. 34.
- ² Mantoux, P. Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century, p. 79.
- ³ House of Commons Journals Vol. XVIII, p. 715. February 15, 1717.

of the weavers' grievances appears from a petition to the King from the weavers of Cornwall on behalf of themselves and many thousands of their brethren in Wiltshire and Somersetshire. Their first accusation was that, while the Clothiers had complained about combinations of weavers, they made no mention of their own alliances made with the purpose of more easily suppressing their workmen. Combinations of workmen were illegal, but so also were combinations of employers. Furthermore, the clothiers had lengthened their warping bars from $12\frac{3}{4}$ " to $14\frac{1}{4}$ " and upwards, by which means the weavers were forced to make three and a half yards instead of the three yards of ancient custom. Again, sums had been deducted from weavers' wages upon pretext of damage done to materials. All these complaints had been set forth before the local justices who had agreed that the weavers were being imposed on. This, however, had been countered by the clothiers bringing in suits at law against the weavers on the issue of the pretended damage so that weavers involved had either to take part in court actions which they could not afford or¹ leave their homes and seek refuge in the woods.

The/

¹
Petition of Weavers in Cornwall, 1718. S.P. Dom 35/14.

The year 1717 marks the beginning of the large-scale struggle between masters and workmen. On October 23rd, Captain William Graves, officer in command of the Fanes Regiment quartered at Exeter wrote to the Secretary at War¹ describing a riot of three hundred weavers in the city. The rioters had pulled down the houses of several clothiers, smashed looms and stolen serges from shops. They had ignored the magistrates who attempted to read the Proclamation and, indeed, were so convinced of the righteousness of their cause that they sent a letter to Graves asking the Regiment "to stand neuter", and continually demonstrated their loyalty to the Hanoverians by carrying around effigies of the royal family.² There was also rioting at Taunton, where the Corporation was at the mercy of bands of weavers who had already assaulted the clothiers of Bradminch.³ The burgesses of Tiverton were similarly terror-struck, and wrote to the Earl of Sunderland, Secretary of State for the North, appealing for protection.⁴ With the arrival of a military force in the area/

¹ Captain Graves to the Secretary at War, October 23, 1717.
S.P. Dom 35/10.

² Read's Weekly Journal, November 24, 1717.

³ The Mayor and Corporation of Taunton to Captain Graves.
October 21, 1717.

⁴ The Burgesses of Tiverton to the Earl of Sunderland.
October 23, 1717.

area rioting at once ceased¹ - though, from the Humble Address² of the High Sheriff and Grand Inquest for Somerset at the Taunton Assizes in March 1718 it appeared that the weavers of Somerset were still unruly, and that a standing force was still considered necessary by the local authorities.

In 1720 trouble was caused at Tiverton when the clothiers there attempted to import combed wool from Ireland.* The combers rioted, broke into stores, burnt Irish wool, and were only subdued after a fierce struggle with the constables in which the combers did not hesitate to use firearms.³ In 1723 the clothiers of Exeter and Dartmouth petitioned Parliament against the combinations of weavers,⁴ and the struggle between clothiers and weavers again resolved itself in open rioting in 1725 at Crediton and Taunton. At Crediton a mob, led and well disciplined by a "captain", threatened to cut serges on looms unless better wages were promised. The rioters were successfully dispersed/

* The clothiers of Tiverton made a second attempt to introduce Irish cloth in 1749 with the result that the weavers rose again. Evening Post, December 28, 1749.

¹ Read's Weekly Journal, November 23, 1717. S.P. Dom 35/10.

² Humble Address to the King, March 17, 1718. S.P. Dom 35/11.

³ Harding: History of the Town of Tiverton I, p. 95.

⁴ House of Commons Journal, Vol XX, pp. 268-9.

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dispersed by the Constables, who took prisoners. Later, however, the weavers rose again, surmounted the Court House where their fellows had been imprisoned, drove away the magistrates and rescued the prisoners. At Taunton on October 6, 1725, a mob of five or six hundred weavers demolished looms and forced clothiers to set fire to the wreckage.¹ The Town Clerk attempted to read the Proclamation, whereat the rioters "pulled off his hat and wig and put dirt upon his head."²

These riots resulted in further Petitions to Parliament from the Mayors, Corporations, and Clothiers, Fullers and Serge Makers of Tiverton, Exeter, Bristol and Taunton in March 1726 against the weavers' practice of assembling in combinations. It was indeed true that weavers and combers were combining. In July 1725, for example, the woolcombers of Alton were accused before Justice Aland at Winchester Assizes of forming a club or society with two supervisors and a book-keeper using a common seal. It was alleged by the prosecution/

¹
The Dublin Journal, October 23, 1725. LVII.
The Dublin Journal, October 30, 1725. LIX.
The British Journal, November 19, 1726. CCXVIII.

²
House of Commons Journal. Vol. XX. pp. 598, 602, 648.

prosecution that the Club had attempted to frame bye-laws regulating the right of entry into the woolcombers' trade, the number of apprentices each master might have at one time, and the qualifications necessary to become a master.¹ When the House of Commons met in committee to consider the Petitions of the Corporations and Clothiers, there was no lack of evidence concerning the existence of combinations. At Exeter, the weavers' club had made bye-laws appointing meeting places, fixing allowances to travelling workmen and laying down methods of ascertaining a fair wage. Clubs and Societies were usually well behaved, though members had sometimes descended to blackmail by forcing clothiers to contribute to the club funds under threat of "cool-staffing" that is, of being tied to a staff and being carried aloft through the streets.

The Committee of the House of Commons reported on March 31, 1726 and made two recommendations. Firstly, that a law preventing illegal combinations of workmen should be enacted immediately and that, secondly, the same law should contain provisions/

1

The London Journal, July 31, 1725. CCLXXXIX.
Read's Weekly Journal. July 31, 1725.

provisions ensuring the better payment of weavers' wages. These recommendations were embodied in the Act against Combinations 1726,¹ a measure of which it has been remarked that "while the state refused to recognise the right of working men to combine together for the protection and advancement of their economic interests, it still accepted, in principle at least, the duty of safeguarding the economic interests of the industrial masses."² Strike offences were made punishable by heavy penalties which, in cases of house breaking, destruction of goods, and threats against persons, involved death or transportation. The sixteenth century method of wage-fixing was stressed as the only and proper way of assessment, and at Easter time justices were to assess wages for each year. No magistrate who was also a clothier was allowed to take part in this assessment, and penalties were to be imposed on clothiers who paid less than the assessed wage.

It would be difficult to find a more pathetic, impractical and ineffective measure than this 1726 Act. Pathetic because it reveals the government of the day as conscious of the sufferings/

¹
12 George I c. 34

²
Lipson, op. cit. p. 120.

sufferings of a large part of its subjects and attempting to retain the paternalistic attitude of earlier governments, yet trammelled in its pity by the rising surge of what the Webbs have termed "Administrative Nihilism". Impractical, because it supposed a greater control by the central over the local authority than in fact existed until a much later date, and because it conceived that the energies of starving men could be withheld or contained by the passing of a measure which contained not one constructive proposal. Ineffective, because it plays no part in the story of relations between clothiers and weavers. The Act might well, indeed, have had no existence in the Statute Book, being ignored both by employer and employed.¹

That this is so may be seen from a large-scale outburst of rioting in late November, 1726, in Wiltshire. Bands of weavers marched round Bradford, Trowbridge, Devizes, Melksham,² Calne, Westbury, Warminster, Shepton, Bruton and Frome.

The/

¹ cf. Howell, G.: The conflicts of Capital and Labour pp. 71-72.

² British Journal, November 19, 1726. CCXVIII
 Mist's Weekly Journal, December 23, 1726. 85
 Mist's Weekly Journal, December 10.

The weavers claimed that the clothiers had lengthened bars so that four or five yards of cloth were added to each piece without extra remuneration for the weavers. Again that some clothiers delivered out work by weight and had made their own pound weight consisting of seventeen instead of sixteen ounces, while others had reduced the rates for different qualities of cloth, though the old rates were a mere living wage. Finally, the clothiers were attempting to incorporate themselves by Act of Parliament to the complete future exclusion of weavers attempting to become clothiers.

Such were the grievances which stimulated hundreds of weavers to acts of riot in the neighbourhood of Bradford. A sympathetic and reasonable magistrate, John Cooper of Trowbridge, approached the weavers and tabulated their grievances. He then called a meeting of the clothiers of Bradford and stated the weavers' case. The clothiers agreed that the weavers were correct in their statements and that they had no justification for lengthening their bars, which was the crux of the quarrel. The clothiers promised a mending of their ways for the future and this promise, when carried back to the weavers by Cooper, very largely pacified the weavers. A small party, however, still distrusted their employers and, two days after the clothiers' /

clothiers' meeting, entered Bradford and destroyed property belonging to clothiers, while a second rising broke out at Frome in Somerset. Negotiations at Frome between clothiers and weavers were carried on by Colonel Powlett, officer in charge of troops quartered there, and a meeting of representatives¹ of both sides was arranged for January 3rd, 1727.

The government had quickly rushed troops to the Bradford area and this step ensured a quiet Christmas. The actions of the government were not, however, merely repressive, for the Duke of Newcastle, showing a commendable desire to arrive at the truth, appointed two commissioners, Giles Earle and George Vaughan, to investigate fully the causes of rioting.² Earle reported from Trowbridge on December 26th, 1726. He found that the weavers had indeed just cause for complaint and had behaved on the whole with a surprising moderation. Two rioters had been apprehended and, he thought, ought to have been released as a measure of appeasement; this, however, the clothiers were determined to oppose, and altogether showed, in his opinion, too great a desire for revenge. The magistrates at/

¹ Magistrates of Trowbridge to Newcastle. December 17, 1726.
S.P. Dom 35/63.

² Report of Giles Earle from Trowbridge 26 December 1726.
S. P. Dom 35/63.

at Trowbridge were reasonable men and had suggested that a petition to the King from the weavers would be a legal and effective way of redressing their wrongs. Two days later Earle reported ¹ from Frome where he had met with unconcealed hostility from the officers of the military and the clothiers. Powlett, the officer in charge, was furious that the government should have thought an investigator necessary and alleged that the government was listening only to the complaints of the weavers while turning a deaf ear to the clothiers. The weavers, moreover, were Jacobite to the core - though Earle had himself noticed that this was not the case - and, Powlett continued, would have reduced Frome to ashes had he and his forces not been present. Earle, by dint of tactful compliments, eventually coaxed Powlett into a more amenable frame of mind and obtained an admission that the present troubles arose from the exactions of the clothiers. Further, that some clothiers had actually taken in their bars but had at the same time reduced their wages to the weavers. From the clothiers at Frome Earle met with nothing but hostility, and he left as quickly as possible hoping against hope that Powlett's conference on January 3rd would result in a settlement.

The/

¹ Second report of Giles Earle from Frome, 28 December, 1726.
S.P. Dom 35/63

The second government investigator, Vaughan, reported from Bath on December 31st.¹ Vaughan found that the riots were, as he and Townshend had suspected in preliminary conversation, due entirely to the oppression of the clothiers. The weavers, too, had received encouragement at first from certain magistrates and landholders who feared that a growth of unemployment among weavers would raise parish rates. The early outrages had thus been rather overlooked, the numbers of the rioters had increased quickly and vagrants and people of no connection with the cloth industry had joined the movement. A few honest clothiers had told him that they were glad that the riots had taken place, for only thus would unscrupulous clothiers who had been underselling their brethren for years be frightened and disciplined into fair dealing with their employees. Vaughan agreed with the magistrates of Trowbridge in thinking that a petition to the King was advisable, and had himself sought the help of a lawyer friend in the drafting of such a petition, a copy of which he enclosed for Townshend's approval.

The government heartily supported the idea of a Petition and/

¹ Report of G. Vaughan, December 31st, 1726. S.P. Dom 35/63.

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and approved of Vaughan's draft.¹ Vaughan was informed that he could promise the weavers a speedy relief for their wrongs in the next session of Parliament provided that they dispersed immediately to their homes and remained there. Unfortunately, the situation had deteriorated before the government's reply arrived because of the untimely arrest of two Bradford weavers on December 31st at the order of a Bradford magistrate, Methven, who was in the control of the clothiers of the district. Especially was he dominated by a clothier named Heylin who was possessed of a virulent nature and was particularly hated by the weavers because he had stopped payment of wages to his employees as soon as rioting broke out, and had openly declared that they might eat pigwash.² On the morning of January 2, Cooper, the magistrate of Trowbridge who had striven so valiantly on behalf of the weavers, heard from spies in the country that the weavers were massing for an attack on Heylin's home and intended to carry off clothiers as hostages until the prisoners apprehended by Methven and already sent to Salisbury Jail had been released. Cooper, though furious with the clothiers/

¹ Townshend to Vaughan, January 2, 1727. S.P. Dom 35/64.

² Mist's Weekly Journal, January 14, 1727. 91.

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clothiers, had no option but to order the Troop at Trowbridge to march to Bradford. The weavers came out in a body to oppose the soldiers and a short skirmish ensued; the weavers quickly lost heart when two or three of their number fell and turned tail.¹

The negotiators were completely downcast. — Cooper relieved his wrath by castigating the stupid Methven and showing him what damage he had done. Vaughan also considered the position lost for peaceful settlement. He had heard that the weavers, exasperated beyond measure, had decided to send for help to the colliers of Kingswood, the rioters par excellence of the period, and certainly the talk of the weavers became wild at this point. References were constantly made to Wat Tyler and Jack Straw, all laws were declared illegal and it was pointed out that Adam had made no will and that therefore all property should be shared equally. Vaughan considered that nothing less than a regiment of Foot scattered throughout the countryside would be sufficient to cope with the situation. Heylin and his fellow clothiers continued to aggravate the weavers by persuading the shopkeepers of Bradford to give no credit. This deliberate attempt at starving the weavers into submission/

¹ J. Cooper to G. Earle, January 4, 1727. S.P. Dom 35/64.

submission had introduced a wilder note into the actions of the rioters, and their threats became more common. At the same time, they still professed the utmost loyalty to King George and chalked G.W.R. standing for George's Weavers - so they told Vaughan - on their hats.¹

In the course of the next week the situation had miraculously eased, and Vaughan was able to report in a much happier frame of mind. The idea of a petition had caught the imagination of the weavers, who were flocking to sign and everywhere were behaving with sobriety. Eight thousand weavers, mainly non-conformists, "anabaptists or presbiterians", had come forward on one day, and Vaughan had viewed the gathering masses with considerable anxiety - an anxiety understandable when the ugly mood of the weavers but a few days previously is remembered. All had gone well, however, and Vaughan felt able to recommend the immediate withdrawal of all troops from the Bradford area.² Vaughan concluded this his last report with the observation that the rioting had from the beginning been the result of the vindictive and unfair conduct of the clothiers/

¹ Vaughan's Second Report. January 2, 1727. S.P. Dom 35/64.

² Mist's Weekly Journal, January 21, 1727. 92.

clothiers who were already protesting that the success of the weavers' petition would inevitably mean their own ruin and that the employment of weavers' children in a clothing industry was a point completely ignored by the weavers. This had often been stressed by clothiers and it was true that a child of eight could, and in many cases did, add to the family income. Nevertheless, as Vaughan had observed to the clothiers, the poor rate in Wiltshire weaving areas was as high as two or three shillings in the pound and unemployment was heavy. The clothiers refused to admit responsibility here, and agreed that the high poor rate was due not to their use of child labour but to the prevailing depression in the trade, which in turn was due to the government's policy of encouraging the export of wool. The hostility of the clothiers remained to the very end. Indeed, they made one impertinent attempt to have the investigator Earle apprehended and sent to Ilchester Jail. Their bitterness is well illustrated by the way in which they continued the prosecution of one of the prisoners sent to Salisbury Prison by Methven. The prisoner, Merricke by name, had been ordered bail by the government against the wishes of the clothiers and most of the magistrates of the district in order that he might assist at the presentation of the weavers' petition to the King in Council. The government had hoped that the charge against Merricke would be dropped, but on his return/

return from London he was put on trial, found guilty of rioting and sentenced to death at the following Assizes at New Sarum. The King's Pardon was, fortunately, granted him¹ on March 28th, 1727.

The weavers' petition reached London on January 16th, 1727 and was considered by a Committee of the Lords of the Privy Council who presented their Report on February 20th.² The weavers complained that the clothiers had formed combinations against them, that warping bars had been lengthened, that deductions had been made from their salaries without justification, and that, although local magistrates had agreed that the clothiers' activities were illegal, the clothiers had counterattacked persistently by bringing in vexatious and expensive law suits against the weavers. The Committee heard evidence from weavers, clothiers and Blackwell Hall Factors, and found that the complaints of the weavers were justified in fact. The Committee therefore reprimanded the clothiers severely and ordered them to look carefully to their behaviour in the future, while at the same time it pointed out to the weavers the criminal folly of their actions. Finally the Committee/

¹ Petition of W. Merricke to the King, March, 1727. S.P. Dom 35/64.

² House of Commons Journal. Vol. XX, February 20th, 1727.

Committee put before both parties several Articles of Agreement which, it was hoped, would establish their relations on a better footing. By these Articles no pound weight was ever to contain more than sixteen ounces and bars and thrumbs were never to exceed three yards three inches and eighteen inches respectively in width. No claim for pretended damages to material made by a clothier should go back beyond Christmas 1726, and no clothier was to use waste materials in his fabrics as had often been the case in the past to the detriment of the weavers. Lastly, all future disputes were to be settled by magistrates at Quarter Sessions.

The weakness of the Articles lay, of course, in this last Article, for there was no reason for thinking that local magistrates would in future be any more efficient or less biased than they had been in the past and there was in fact no change in their conduct. As soon as June 1727 the weavers, wearing high-crowned hats and with soot covered faces, were rioting around Trowbridge because several masters had obliged their men to work under price. The rioters tore many fine broad cloths out of the looms and tore them to shreds.¹ At the end of July/

¹ Mist's Weekly Journal, June 3, 1727. 111.

July there were similar riots at Stroudwater, also caused by an attempt on the clothiers' part to lower wages.¹ Again, the magistrates of Gloucester assessed weavers' wages in 1728; yet this assessment was completely ignored by the clothiers until 1756.² In the same way, the weavers of Bristol in 1729 sought an increase in wages. The magistrates did nothing, and rioting broke out.³ In particular a large mob attacked the house of a drugget-maker, Stephen Fechem, demanding an increase of a shilling per piece. Fechem declared that such an increase would ruin him, but assured the weavers that he would never lower their wages.⁴ On September 27th, after partially destroying the house of another drugget-maker, Harris, the mob leader came to Fechem to warn him that unless he delivered out work at the mob's price he would receive similar treatment. Fechem, a man of considerable courage, refused to listen to threats and impressed the mob leader to such an extent that he returned/

¹ Mist's Weekly Journal, July 29, 1727. 119.

² Lipson, op. cit. p. 115

³ Mayor of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle, October 6, 1729. S.P. Dom 36/15.

⁴ Read's Weekly Journal, October 11, 1729.
The Craftsman, October 4, 1729. 170.
Petition of S. Fechem to the King. S.P. Dom 36/12.

returned to the weavers, who were assembled in a courtyard, and advised them to retire since Fechem had fire-arms and would undoubtedly use them if attacked. The mob was about to disperse when a party of hotheads whipped up feeling and persuaded some five hundred rioters to attack Fechem's house immediately. The mob broke into the cellars of the house and destroyed goods contained therein but only as they smashed the front door with obvious intent of entering the house itself to murder him, did Fechem open fire on the rioters. The Sheriff, Constables and a large military force arrived immediately after the firing and drove away the weavers.¹

Twenty five prisoners were taken and charged with breaking the 1726 Act against Combinations.² Attorney General Yorke told Newcastle that it was absolutely necessary to make a strict example of the rioters, and it is from this time onwards that it is possible to observe a change in the attitude of the government towards the weavers. In 1726 and 1727 the government had sympathised with the riots and had done what they could to redress/

¹ Report of Attorney General to Duke of Newcastle, December 20, 1729.
S.P. Dom 36/12.

² See above page .

redress grievances known to be real. Following this date, however, there is interest only in the maintenance of order, and the basic causes of riot tend to be ignored. From 1729 onwards the story of the government's actions towards the weavers and other employees in the clothing industry of the south west is one of repression only.

The industry was quiet until 1738 when riots broke out at Tiverton because of the activities of a publican named Grimes, who had been buying up cloth rejected by the merchants and selling the rejects at a reduced price in Tiverton. This, the weavers considered, was adding to the already serious problem of unemployment and had been expressly forbidden by the Articles of Agreement of 1727. Cloth defective in quality ought to be destroyed, and not sold to the possible exclusion of high grade material from the local market. The Tiverton weavers, joined by their fellows of Uffculme, Silverton, Cullompton, Bradminch and Culmstock, attacked Grimes at his inn, the "Red Lion" in Gold Street, scattered his serges, and cool-staffed him to the Mayor's house in Peter Street. The constables emerged to disperse the mob and a scuffle ensued on Exeter Hill during which a weaver was killed.¹

More/

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Harding: History of Tiverton, Vol. I. p. 107.
Dunsford, M.: History of Tiverton, p. 244.

More serious rioting broke out in November 1738 in Wiltshire where the weavers resented an attempt to reduce wages. At Trowbridge and Bradford weavers, sheermen and boys to the number of two thousand roamed the countryside and entered Melksham with threats of punitive measures against the clothiers unless wages were raised a penny a yard. One clothier, Coulthurst, bolder than his terrified fellows, stoutly refused whereupon the weavers entered his house and destroyed his furniture, cloth and wool yarn, finally razing the house to the ground. The other clothiers immediately signed a legal contract to pay the extra penny, and this temporarily pacified the rioters.¹ On November 28, however, two of the mob were taken up before Justice Holland at Chippenham and the weavers rose again and devastated the houses on either side of Coulthurst's.² This was the end of the rioting and with the re-establishment of order in December, numbers of prisoners were committed for trial.³ In March, 1739, the magistrate Holland wrote to the Duke/

¹ The Daily Post, December 4, 1738. 6001.

² The Daily Post, December 5, 1738. 6002.

The Universal Spectator and Weekly Journal, December 9, 1738. 531.

³ The London Daily Post and General Advertiser, December 23, 1738. 1296.

Duke of Newcastle noting with satisfaction that three of the rioters had been capitally convicted and that of ten who were indicted for misdemeanours, but one was acquitted. "The Clothiers express the greatest satisfaction imaginable upon this occasion ... they are returning home full of hopes that from the examples that will be made of these rioters, they and their families may be enabled to carry on their business and enjoy their properties in safety."¹ Admittedly the weavers had done great wrong; but their actions were the result of hardship and victimisation, and it was a tragedy that the government after 1727 seemed to give up their attempts at enforcing regulations which should have protected the weavers.

The whole situation was summed up in an article in "The Daily Post" of December 23, 1738, entitled "An Essay on Riots." The writer of the Essay agreed trade was bad, but argued that oppression by the clothiers and retaliatory rioting by the weavers was no adequate solution for the depression. He suggested that the main acts of oppression committed by the clothiers were the formation of combinations amongst themselves to/

1

R. Holland to the Duke of Newcastle, March 17, 1739.
S.P. Dom 36/47.

to lower the wages of their employees, the use of the "truck" system, and the imposition of heavy rents for tenements in which workers were forced to live. The "truck" system in particular was pernicious, for not only were employees forced to buy provisions at clothiers' shops but they were forced to accept clothiers' prices and even clothiers' weights.¹

The plight of the weavers was also well described by an anonymous writer to Lord Harrington, Secretary of State for the North in 1739. The clothiers were, according to the writer "beating down the wages of the poor and paying them in bread, cheese, meat, linen and woollen cloth and so forth all at a price at least one third more than the real value, by which means the poor manufacturer is obliged to slight his work and consequently make a bad commodity. At Westbury Leigh there are two Brothers who are Clothiers and Justices whose father and mother were poor work folks in the woollen manufacture. These two Justices graze their cattle on their own lands, employ their own people to kill them and then pay it at a high price to their work folk for their labour; and contrary to an old Law have of their own tyrannical wills built a small prison near them/

¹ These charges were reprinted from "The Gloucester Journal", March 1739.

them in terror to the poor ... wherever a tradesman is made a justice, a tyrant is created. It would be as rational to make a shepherd of a wolf as to make a Justice of a Clothier."¹

The writer of the Essay above quoted expressed the opinion that the wisdom and goodness of a government ought to shew themselves by "looking with the utmost integrity and care into the real causes of a riot, and using all possible means to redress all true grievances of the people."² It was not the policy of the government of 1738, however, to intervene between master and man in the cloth industry, and the reluctance to interfere becomes ever more marked. Thus in 1756 an attempt was made by the Gloucester weavers to enforce the wage agreement made by local magistrates in 1728. The weavers secured a re-enactment of the assessment clauses of the Statute of Labourers, whereupon the clothiers presented all workmen with a document stating that wages were satisfactory and that all employees would agree to remain at the prevailing terms. The clothiers argued that it was impossible by the nature of the industry to ensure a fixed wage, that no law should come between the private contract/

¹ "Englishman" to Lord Harrington, February 28, 1739. S.P. Dom 36/47

² The Daily Post, December 22, 1738. 6017.

contract of each clothier and weaver as individuals, and that the weavers would, if unopposed, become more masters of the clothiers than the clothiers had been of the weavers. In any case the magistrates refused to enforce the clauses of the 1756 re-enactment of the Statute of Labourers and the weavers went on strike for six weeks. The clothiers took their case to Parliament which repealed the 1756 Act and may thus be said¹ to have given final freedom of action to the employers.

Thus the clothing industry of the southwest during the first half of the eighteenth century appears as a thoroughly unhappy one divided bitterly into employers and employed, with a central government at first well-meaning but powerless to enforce a policy on its local representatives, the magistrates, and after 1727 gradually becoming indifferent to suffering and interested only in the maintenance of public order.

¹
Lipson, op. cit. pp. 115-116.

III. RIOTS IN THE NEWCASTLE COAL TRADE.

The keelmen of the River Tyne provide a second example of early Eighteenth Century combinations of workers involved in frequent industrial struggles with their employers, the middlemen Hostmen and Fitters who, to an increasing extent, arranged for the transport of coal from the collieries at Newcastle to the waiting sea-going vessels at South Shields. The fitters employed three or four keelmen under a skipper to navigate each keel¹ and the total number of keelmen in Newcastle at this time was approximately six hundred.² The keelmen were workmen in the modern sense.³ They possessed no tools of their own and had only their labour to sell, being employed by the fitters from Christmas to Christmas under a contract which fixed wages, rates and conditions of labour.⁴ It is perhaps significant that in the Records of the Hostmen the terms "keelmen" and "bondsmen" are used indiscriminately, for the fitters certainly regarded the keelmen as bound hand and foot by the Christmas contract. Even by the middle of the/

¹For a general description of labouring conditions in the coal trade see Hughes E: North Country Life in the Eighteenth Century pp (250 and 25). Galloway: Annals of Coal Mining p. 48.

²Dendy F.W.: Extracts from the Records of the Company of Hostmen of Newcastle upon Tyne. p. 172.

³cf. Mantoux P.: The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century pp. 83-84.

⁴Rex v. Keelmen Newcastle Assizes 1750. Newcastle Guildhall Archives. Wellbourn E.: The Miners' Unions of Northumberland and Durham p. 20.

the Seventeenth Century the keelmen were seeking to protect themselves against their employers by petitioning Parliament for incorporation.¹ Their desire for protection against their employers became even greater at the turn of the century when the Hostmen assumed control over the keelmen's praiseworthy hospital scheme. This scheme, in itself a remarkable testimony to the strength of communal feeling and organisation among the keelmen, was devised to take care of the aged and sick. The Town Corporation very naturally gave their blessing to the project and provided the land for the hospital building. The keelmen, however, unfortunately decided that their funds should be deducted by the employers, hostmen, fitters, and owners of keels, at the rate of one penny per tide, and entrusted to the Governor and Stewards of the Hostmen's Company.² A hospital was actually erected in 1701 near the Wall Knoll Tower and overlooking the keelmen's suburb of Sandgate - "the first ever built by the poor" according to the then Bishop of Ely³ - but the administration of the funds became/

¹Nef J.U. Rise of the British Coal Industry Vol II p. 177.

²Dendy op.cit. p. 180. Order of May 19th, 1699.

³Middlebrook S. Newcastle upon Tyne Its growth and Achievement p. 85.

became a sore point between fitters and keelmen, who suspected, and perhaps rightly, that their funds were being used to no good purpose. In 1707 and again in 1719 they attempted to wrest control of the scheme away from their employers by seeking incorporation from Parliament. This the Hostmen and Fitters were determined not to allow. They considered, indeed, that incorporation "would be entire ruin not only to this Company but the Corporation and Trade in general",¹ and counter-petitioned Parliament successfully against the keelmen.

This quarrel, sordid enough when the worthy nature of the charity ^sin considered, is nevertheless of fundamental importance in the growth of a workers' combination. "It is perhaps not too much to see in this dispute between keelmen and their employers a beginning of the struggle over the establishment of trade unions".² There were other good reasons, too, why communal feeling should be strong amongst the keelmen of Newcastle. They were, firstly, brought together by a strong bond of common origin or nationality. As early

¹ Dendy p. 186. 5th March, 1719.

² Nef op.cit. p. 179.

early as 1640 Scots had been in the habit of coming south to the Tyne for work and the Scottish nature of the keelmen may be seen from lists like the following, compiled by the fitters after the 1750 rioting:⁴

A List of the Keelmen that were at Christmas and now in Henry Atkinson's Work.¹

Skipper's Names with their respective men.	Time of being in Town	Where they came from	Where born or Settled
James Bone Skipr.	Born in Town		
James Young) Robert Arklay) Bound	Ditte.		
Thomas Willson	Many years		
James Robinson	2 months	Denny	Denny
- - - - -			
John Blair Skipr.	28 years	Middle Lothian	
Johathan Chaplain) Peter Atkinson) Bound	12 years	St. Andrews	
	14 years	Leighton	Coldstream
Jonathan Porteous	22 years	Newton in Scotland	Musselburgh
Robt/			

1

Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

Skipper's Names with their respective Men.	Time of being in Town	Where they came from	Where born or settled
Robt. Adams	26 years	Long Houghton	Newcastle
Jonathan Laing)) Bound Jonathan Yulle)	16 years	Elgin and Murray	"
	14 years	Falkirk	Campsey
Alexander Moor	7 years	Falkirk	Campsey

James Hempseed Skipr.	Born in New- castle		
Jonathan Finlay now Skipr.	22 years	Musselburgh	Campsey
David Turner)) Bound)	Born in New- castle		Campsey
George Gordon)	4 years	Kinghorn	Campsey
William Manners	4 years	Tranent	Campsey
Alexander Brison	9 years	Tranent	Benton

John Coulson Skipr.	Born in New- castle		
James Sharp)) Bound James McAllister)	Gateshead		Benton
	12 years	Galloway	Benton

Walter/			

Skipper's Names with their respective Men.	Time of being in Town	Where they came from	Where born or settled
Walter Brass Skipr.	27 years	Long Lewiston	Benton
Thos. Bruce)) Bound	16 years	Linlithgow	Benton
John Dougall)	24 years	Both Lennar	Benton
Wm. Johnston	7 years	Both Lennar	Benton

James Temple Skipr.	22 years	Painstow	Benton
Thos. Hogg)) Bound	10 years	Whittingham	Benton
Thos. Coulson)			
Geo. Brotherston	18 years	Longnetherise	Benton

Stephen Gothard Skipr.	28 years	Yorkshire	Benton
Andrew Paterson)) Bound			
Jonathan Kahours)			
Geo. Vicars	14 years	Stirling	Menstrea
Jonathan Kennedy	18 years	Melrose	Newcastle
James Stranghan	15 years	Aberdeen	

Taking lists such as the above into consideration, it becomes apparent that at least half of the usual fitter's company of keelmen were of Scots origin. There were, of course, fitters'

fitters' companies where the Scots were few in number as, for example, in the case of the fitter Joseph Ord who employed only seven Scots out of a total of twenty-eight employees; but, on the other hand, there were many fitters like Charles Atkinson who employed forty Scots out of a total of seventy-four. There can be no doubt that there was a large Scottish community largely recruited from the ports of the Firth of Forth, bound together by common background and traditions, and perhaps even further thrown together by the natural dislike of people particularly exposed even at this late date to material expeditions across the Border. The Scots in Newcastle even lived together in the quarter known as Sandgate, according to Wesley¹ "the poorest and most contemptible part of the town", but "long the favourite resort of poor and industrious adventurers from Scotland". It was here that Wesley, on a Sunday in May 1742, began his mission by singing the 100th Psalm to a few people - who had swollen to fifteen hundred enthusiasts by the same afternoon. Even before his coming, there had been a vigorous Presbyterian community at Sandgate² run by Scots and one need look no further/

¹Wesley J. Journal May 1742.

²Middlebrook op.cit. p. 127.

further than at the Hospital scheme for a tangible proof of kindness of thought and communal sense of responsibility.

With such powerful forces pulling so many of the keelmen together it is not surprising to note that they emerge as ardent resisters of oppression and victimisation by employers, and that Nef was well justified in his claim that the beginnings of Trade Unionism could be seen in the quarrels between fitters and keelmen.¹ To such an extent, indeed, had they become Trade Unionists that in 1728 they begged their employers to dismiss all keelmen refusing to pay the penny per tide levy;² this must constitute one of the earliest "closed shop" incidents. There is also evidence to believe that the keelmen did not restrict their activities to the bettering of their own circumstances for, during the 1731 riots among the Durham colliers, the leaders of the movement, travelling from pit to pit inciting colliers to rise, were "Tyne water men".³ It is, however, not until the riots of 1750 that the keelmen took extreme action to better their own conditions.^x

The/

^x The rioting of 1740, in which keelmen took part, was concerned only with shortage of food and in no way an internal trade dispute. See Chapter I on Corn Riots.

¹ See above.

² Dendy op. cit. p. 191. 4th December, 1728.

³ S.P.Dom. 36/25. Informations taken before John Hedworth. November 13, 1731.

The grievances they suffered are set forth in a statement¹ of their case—drawn up in all probability by a mysterious lawyer from Edinburgh, Herdman by name, who was suspected by the magistrates² of being the brain behind the movement, but who succeeded in escaping their clutches and in vanishing from the scene.^x The statement claimed that keels were being overloaded and that there was no adequate method of ensuring that overloading should cease. The fitters maintained that any skipper who thought his keel was too heavily laden had only to bring his boat to the keel where it would be condemned or approved by the King's Inspector. This, however, ignored the fact that, while an Inspector could visit at will, his services could not be requested, and were in practice refused to keelmen. Furthermore, the King's loading mark was quite clear on each keel, and there was absolutely no excuse for over-loading.

Secondly, the keelmen objected to the establishment of what they called "can-houses", places where they were expected to await orders. While waiting, they were also expected to while away the time by drinking beer sold by fitters' servants/

^x A parallel to the case of Herdman is found during the brief Sunderland riots of May, 1719, when the leader of the rioters was discovered to be a schoolmaster named Flower. (Robinson, Collector of Customs at Sunderland to Commissioners 15th May, 1719. S.P.Dom. 35/16.)

¹ Statement. Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

² Mayor to Duke of Bedford, 30th April 1750. S.P.Dom 36/112.

servants at the usual price but which was of such poisonous quality that it had killed several keelmen and was known as Savage Beer. Again, the fitters were supposed to allow the keelmen sixpence for the hire of two loaders at Staithes. The Staithesmen took the sixpence but provided no extra labour, thus forcing the keelmen to wait an inordinate time and to make a journey down river late at night; Staithesmen admitted they made £50 a year by this ruse. Wages were another source of complaint. It was vital that the keelmen should be paid on a Saturday morning if their wives were to go to market with any hope of obtaining goods of quality and reasonable price. As things were, the market was often closed when their wives arrived. Again, it was felt that a messenger should be hired to go to and fro between Newcastle and South Shields bringing orders to the staithes. This service, costing only $\frac{1}{2}$ d a mile would reduce the time spent hanging about. Another grievance was the sending of keels to South Shields after twelve o'clock on a Saturday. This often meant that the keelmen had to hang about South Shields for the Saturday and Sunday nights, thus being prevented from being with their families and from attending public worship "which is our desire to attend however we may be/

be derided for it".

The vexed question of "stirr'd" keels aroused a deep resentment. A "stirr'd" keel was one in which the proper skipper, paid at a rate of twenty pence more than the crew, was replaced by a common labourer paid at four pence above the ordinary rate thus greatly increasing the fitters' profits and adding to the dangers of the trade. The Statement claimed that two-third's of the keels were "stirr'd".

Lastly the statement complained of the frequent non-payment of the extra shillings agreed to by the fitters when the keelmen loaded coal to ships aground at South Shields. In such cases the extra labour was considerable, for the keelmen had to throw coal from the keel to two other keelmen standing on a platform erected half way up the side of the ship. These in turn flung the coal over the bulwarks. Keelmen were also being expected to help staithesmen cart coal on land. This was no part of their duty, and they were determined not to allow the practice to continue.

All these points had been referred to the magistrates in 1744 and a series of Articles governing the trade had been drawn up in that year. These Articles, so the keelmen claimed, had been ignored by the fitters who had thus rendered the annual contract meaningless and void. The keelmen/

keelmen resolved, therefore, in March 1750 to try a new method of protest, the strike. On March 19th, 20th and 21st all keelmen on the Tyne stopped work and prevented any further cargoes of coal passing down river, even throwing¹ over-board coal already laden in keels. The strike continued for six weeks. Large vessels arriving at South Shields were forced to depart in ballast, the glass houses, salt-works and other industries on the Tyne had to close down and even special cargoes of coal to the garrison at Gibraltar were stopped. In desperation the Mayor, Robert Sorsbie, brought the fitters and representatives of the keelmen together and examined the keelmen's grievances. The fitters promised to adhere to the Articles of 1744 but at the same time made it clear that they were unable to increase wages. This did not satisfy the keelmen, who decided to remain on strike. Though the keelmen did no mischief, Sorsbie acted stringently and imprisoned sixteen of the strikers, hoping that this strong action would frighten their companions and force them back to work. This hope was not realised, however, and Sorsbie and his brother/

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Case against the rioters 1750. Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

brother magistrates organised a mixed company of tailors, waggon-men and labourers to man the keels,¹ while the fitters requested shop keepers and vendors in the market to refuse all credit to keelmen. The double attack provoked the keelmen beyond endurance and on May 4th a great body of over a thousand gathered together at Sandgates and attacked all keels being manned by volunteers, the latter ending up in the water. For three days the keelmen rioted, but on May 7th a military force arrived at Newcastle and the strikers dispersed, beaten at last. At the Assizes held in the following year several of the keelmen were put on trial for riot and given sentences of up to three months' imprisonment, the prosecution costing their employers £46: 2: 9 - money well² spent for "preventing the like disturbances for the future".

The grievances of the keelmen however remained and found expression later in the great strike of 1765³ and the riots of 1821.⁴ The efforts of the keelmen to improve their conditions in 1750 were thus of no avail.

¹ Mayor of Newcastle to Duke of Bedford. S.P.Dom 36/112. 30th April, 1750.

² Dendy. p. 203. 4th January, 1751.

³ Welbourne E. op. cit. p. 21.

⁴ Archael. Aeliana. Fourth series. Vol. XIV.

IV. THE CALICO RIOTS OF 1719 and 1720.

The use of "fine printed Calicoes" from the East became fashionable in England following its introduction by Queen Mary at the end of the seventeenth century. So popular, indeed, did calicoes become that the woollen industry became alarmed and, as a result of this alarm, Parliament in 1700 passed an Act forbidding the importation of printed calicoes. This Act had little effect. Plain calicoes could still be imported and one effect of this protective measure was to encourage the growth of a printing industry in this country. The main reason, however, for the failure of the 1700 Act was the preference of women of all classes for gay cool calico dresses instead of the sombre heavy woollens, especially in the hot summer months. The wearing of calicoes became ever more common, and between 1717 and 1719 their use became quite widespread.¹

At the same time the clothiers and weavers of the woollen industry were suffering from a trade depression. Not unnaturally, if somewhat naively, they seized on the growth of the/

1 Lipson E. The Economic History of England. Vol. III pp 36-44
Thomas P.J. Mercantilism and the East India Trade pp118-165.

the sale of calicoes as the cause of their misery and insisted that prosperity would return only with the prohibition of the use of calicoes. This feeling became so strong amongst the starving masses of Spittlefields in June 1719 that it found expression in riots and a widespread destruction of calico gowns.

Disturbances began in London on the night of June 10, with some insults and attacks on women wearing calicoes.¹ On the following day a large mob of unemployed and starving weavers roamed the streets tearing gowns and throwing nitric acid. The Lord Mayor of London hastily ordered the City gates to be shut, summoned the trained bands and sent for military aid to Sunderland, Secretary of State for the North.² Secretary-at-War Craggs quickly ordered a troop of Horse Guards into Spittlefields and saw to it that there was a strong force at the Tower.³ These measures were probably considered necessary because it was by no means clear at first whether the riots were an expression of economic or political disorder. This was due to the unfortunate coincidence of the outbreak of the calico riots with the Pretender's Birthday on June 10. Many people/

1 A. Boyer. Political State. Vol. XVII p 627.

2 The Original Weekly Journal. June 13, 1719.

3 C. Delafaye to Major D'Oyley at the Tower. June 13, 1719.
S.P. Dom. 35/16.

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people in London and Westminster celebrated the day by wearing a white rose,¹ and a notorious Jacobite, John Humphreys did in fact seek to turn the weavers' riots into an anti-Hanoverian instrument. Humphreys was, however, quickly handed over by the weavers themselves to Justice Tillard who committed him to Newgate on a charge of High Treason.² It soon became obvious that the rioting weavers were in no way disaffected, and were moved solely by economic causes.

The centre of the riots was at Spittlefields.^x The situation here was well handled by the brave and energetic magistrate Isaac Tillard who organised a posse of constables and dispersed a large mob at Bunhillfields on June 11.³ The weavers were easily dispersed and fled towards Southwark. Here Justice John Lade was gathering his constables, but they were not assembled in time to prevent the entry of some two hundred weavers into the Mint, "a pretended privileged place "from arrest". Some time later Lade led his constables into the supposed place of sanctuary, but the weavers were forewarned of the attack and escaped leaving only two prisoners.⁴ Lade/

1 The Plymouth Weekly Journal. June 19, 1719.

2 The Weekly Journal. June 19, 1719. On this point, see also the testimony of an unknown weaver in 1728; "Spittlefields has always been free from even High Church Mobs" S.P.Dom. 36/8

3 I. Tillard, magistrate to C. Delafaye. June 12, 1719 S.P.Dom. 35/16

4 Information of John Lade, June 13, 1719. S.P.Dom 35/16

x The contemporary spelling is adhered to throughout this chapter.

Lade and his fellow magistrates then paraded the streets of Southwark giving notice as they passed that assembling of weavers was to be reported immediately to them or to a constable. Lade, in his report to the Lords Justices, concluded of the rioters that "the vox populi", or the rumour of the mob, was not disrespectful to his Majesty or his Government, but the word was "Must the poor weavers starve", "Shall the Ingy (meaning the East India) calicoes be worn whilst the poor weavers and their families perish?".¹

On the same day a party of weavers set out from Spittlefields for Lewisham (Lucem) to destroy calico presses there. This party was quickly overtaken by a detachment of the Guards and dispersed, one weaver being killed.²

On the following night (June 12) the weavers of Spittlefields again rose in numbers and had to be suppressed by the Guards. Two prisoners were taken to New Prison. This led to an attack by the weavers on the prison which was beaten off by the magistrates and posse. Four more prisoners were taken and sent to Newgate.³

Throughout/

1 J. Lade, magistrate to C. Delafaye. 13 June, 1719. S.P. Dom. 35/16.

2 The Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer. June 13, 1719.

3 The Original Weekly Journal. June 20, 1719.

Throughout June, 1719, the weavers continued to attack women wearing calicoes. They moved in small bodies and under cover of darkness,¹ and the persistence of the attacks led the newspapers to discuss the whole question. Mist's Weekly Journal of June 27, pointed out that the weavers were on the verge of starvation and were not acting without a sense of real grievance. It was unfortunate that calicoes were so attractive and cheap, costing but one-eighth of woollens; nevertheless they should have been completely forbidden by the 1700 Act which was the direct cause of the weavers' troubles. On the other hand Read's Weekly Journal of the same date thought that the reason for the plight of the weavers was not to be found in the popularity of calicoes. Rather did it lie in the covetousness of masters who took far too many apprentices. The number of weavers in London had doubled in the last ten years. The month of July became a period of reflection, during which attacks were ^{scarce} ~~scarce~~ in London. On July 1, the Company of Weavers addressed a Declaration to the Journeymen of their trade. The Masters agreed that there was a decay of trade and that it sprang mainly/

1 The Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer. June 27, 1719.
Mist's Weekly Journal. June 27, 1719.

from the use of printed calicoes. The violent methods adopted by the weavers, however, would not set matters right. The correct course of action was to present a petition to Parliament. This the Masters would already have done had there not been in preparation during the last parliamentary Session an act for the better prevention of the smuggling of printed calicoes.¹ The Journeymen Weavers replied on July 27. They protested their loyalty to King George and expressed pleasure that their Masters were going to represent their cause to Parliament. At the same time they hoped that masters would employ as many weavers as possible and that they would see to it that their womenfolk and servants wore no calicoes. Many of the Masters had allowed themselves to be "misled through the boundless ambition and pride of their wives.. "the tumults and riots which we have had of late are perhaps "owing to these excessive follies, for the working people have "certainly been much exasperated to see such evil example among "Master Weavers, Throwsters, Silkmen, Dyers and Mercers".² The government attempted to ease the unemployment problem by advertising/

1 Read's Weekly Journal. July 4, 1719.

2 The Daily Courant. July 27, 1719.

advertising immediate employment for weavers in the making of sailcloth for the navy and from the beginning of the riots advised weavers to go to the sail-making factories at Hoxton and at Reading.¹ This, however, was no great relief, and though attacks were rare during July, the misery of the weavers remained. On July 30, four weavers were put in the pillory for participating in the June riots. While they stood, watched by a sympathetic crowd, three women dressed in calicoes drove round in a hackney coach jeering at the prisoners. This was too much for the unemployed weavers who attacked and beat the mockers.² This incident caused a fresh outbreak of attacks on the Bridge and in Moorfields during the first week of August,³ and isolated attacks took place throughout August and September. Sunday was the usual day for the occurrence of incidents, presumably because it was the day when most women assumed their finery.⁴ With the approach of the winter, calicoes disappeared from the streets and riots in London ceased save for an incident on December 17, when some headstrong women deliberately walked through Spittlefields wearing calicoes and mocking the weavers.⁵

Outside/

1 The London Gazette. June 13, 1719.

2 The Original Weekly Journal. August 1, 1719.

3 Mist's Weekly Journal. August 8, 1719.

4 Read's Weekly Journal. August 15, 1719.

The Original Weekly Journal. August 29, 1719.

The Orphan Revived or Powell's Weekly Journal. Sept. 12, 1719.

The Daily Courant. October 17, 1719.

5 The Original Weekly Journal. October 17, 1719.

The Daily Post. December 19, 1719.

Outside London there were reports of riots only at Norwich where mobs on July 4 and 5, roamed the streets attacking all women wearing calicoes. The magistrates took one prisoner, but were so frightened by the threats of the rioters that they quickly decided to release him.¹ Elsewhere in clothing areas opposition to calicoes took a less violent form. At Bristol, for example, some two hundred clothiers and merchants signed an agreement stating that they would have no dealings with any butchers, bakers, or other tradesmen whose wives continued to wear calicoes, and that their own wives and servants should burn all their calicoes by August 1.²

The general nature of the opposition to calicoes was revealed in the ninety odd Petitions which were sent up to Parliament during November, December 1719, and January 1720.³ Earlier, in October 1719, the Weavers' Company had petitioned the Lords Justices who appointed the Commissioners of Trade to enquire into the effect of the wearing of calicoes on the woollen industry.⁴ The Commissioners consulted representatives of/

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- 1 Mist's Weekly Journal. July 11, 1719.
 - 2 Read's Weekly Journal. July 5, 1719.
 - 3 The Weekly Medley LXXI. November 28, 1719.
The Orphan Revived. December 5, 1719.
Mist's Weekly Journal, December 5, 1719.
The Daily Post, December 19, 1719.
 - 4 The Daily Post. October 23, 1719.

of woollen and calico industries and submitted their report on December 12. This recommended that the wearing of calicoes should be forbidden and that this country should follow the example of France where the prohibition had already been enforced.¹

On January 14, the House of Commons sat in committee to consider the accumulated Petitions for and against calicoes, and heard the arguments of both sides.² The weavers repeated the claim that the decay of the woollen industry could be directly attributed to the popularity of calicoes. The calico printers, on the other hand, pointed to the fact that calico printing was now in itself an important industry and a source of wealth. On February 12 the House in Committee resolved that the use of all printed, stained, and dyed calicoes and linens should be prohibited. A Bill to this effect was introduced on March 1, and went safely through to the Lords. Here, however, for some unknown reason, the question was on May 3, adjourned for six weeks.³ This check caused the weavers/

1 Thomas P.J. op cit pp 152-165.

The Daily Courant. October 17, 1719.

2 Journals of the House of Commons.

The Weekly Journal. January 2, 1720.

The Daily Post 88. January 13, 1720.

The Ludlow Post - Man. XVI. January 22, 1720.

The Ludlow Post - Man. XVII. January 29, 1720.

3 Journals of the House of Lords. May 3, 1720. Vol XXI p 316.

weavers of Spittlefields to rise immediately and great numbers appeared in the streets around Parliament House. Horse Guards were sent to patrol Spittlefields and Whitechapel.¹ Parties of weavers roamed the streets tearing calicoes. On the following day a mob of several hundreds again approached Parliament, but dispersed quietly on the appearance of the Horse Guards.² The Weavers Company quickly held a General Court of Assistants to decree how the weavers could be pacified. They published Heads of Advice which pointed out that the Company could in no way encourage or support rioters, and that the action of the Lords was only a temporary hindrance. Masters were urged to keep as many employees in work as possible. "Above all we recommend to you to use your authority with your "servants and your interest among your workmen to prevail with them to bear patiently the delay of their deliverance.....that they may give no advantage to their enemies to represent them as people unworthy of the good that is intended for them".³

Despite/

1 The Daily Post. May 5, 1720.

2 Major of Southwark to Earl Stanhope. May 5, 1720. S.P. Dom.
Mist's Weekly Journal. May 7, 1720. 35/20.

3 The Daily Post. May 13, 1720.

Despite these measures, acts of violence were common throughout May.¹ One Dalby, a French calico-printer, particularly aroused the wrath of the weavers in that he made public his opinion that the weavers were "a company of lazy fellows whose poverty was rather owing to their idleness than want of work." The weavers gathered around his house and threatened to pull it down. Fortunately good humour prevailed over anger and with Dalby's flight from Spittlefields to the City, the mob dispersed.² At Norwich too the news of the adjournment of the Bill caused riots, and the weavers there threatened to pull down their Member of Parliament's house at Windham, some six miles from the City. The rioters believed that Blackwell, their Member, had voted against the Bill in the Commons. However, Blackwell himself appeared and assured the rioters that this was not so, and the mob dispersed.³

During June and July the weavers in London continued to tear calicoes, but acted so swiftly and with such cunning that/

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|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | The Weekly Journal. May 14, 1720. | { | Memorandum and De-positions taken before Sir Halcour Masters and Alexander Ward, Magistrates for the County of Middlesex. May 11, 1720. |
| | The Daily Post. May 17, 1720. | | |
| | Mist's Weekly Journal. June 18, 1720. | | |
| 2 | Mist's Weekly Journal. June 21, 1720. | { | S.P. Dom. 35/20. |
| 3 | The Daily Post. May 17, 1720. | | |

that they were rarely caught. A Constable of Hoxton attempted on July 1 to check a mob tearing calicoes at Hackney and was severely beaten for his pains.¹ At Bristol, too, there were demonstrations in July when weavers attacked women wearing calicoes.²

With the passing of the 1720 Act³ against the wearing of calicoes (7 Geo. 1 c 7), however, disturbances ceased. By this Act the wearing of calicoes was forbidden after December 25, 1722, as was also the use of calicoes in the manufacture of household furniture. Thus, to a certain extent the Calico Riots had been successful - though the success itself was very limited and indeed itself encouraged the growth of the Lancashire cotton industry, instead of proving a lasting protection for the woollen interests.⁴ Muslins could still be imported and the coarse cottons of Manchester could be produced without restriction. The cotton industry therefore continued to expand, and the success of the calico rioters was but immediate and restricted.

1 ~~The Weekly Journal~~
The London Journal) July 9, 1720.

2 Deposition by Dorothy Orwell. July 9, 1720. S.P.Dom. 35/22.

2 Applebee's original Weekly Journal. July 16 & Aug.13, 1720.

3 This Act is frequently referred to as the 1721 Act e.g.
Usher A.P. The Introduction to the Industrial History of
England. p. 284.

Williams B. The Wig Supremacy. p. 108.

Lipson Economic History of England. Vol. III p 44.

Hamilton H. History of the Homeland. p. 106.

As can be clearly seen from the above chapter and from
Statutes at Large. Vol. V. p. 338, it was passed in 1720.

4 Usher A. I. op. cit. pp 284-286.

V TURNPIKE RIOTS

The first half of the Eighteenth Century marks a turning point in the history of roads in Britain, for it was during these years that traffic began to appear in modern shape with the wheeled cart gradually replacing the pack-horse. It is easy, remembering especially the deterioration in the state of the country's roads since the Reformation, to imagine the effect of wheels on loose surfaces and to picture the annoyance of the more conservative road users.¹ The growth in wheeled traffic meant that the state of the roads, previously taken for granted, had to undergo improvement. It was, however, unfair to expect the Parish as of old to maintain roads which were being misused chiefly by passing traffic. Slowly - for the realisation that it was unfair itself came slowly - the principle that traffic itself should bear the cost of road maintenance was accepted, and this resulted in the setting up of Turnpike Trusts empowered to take tolls on definite stretches of road /

¹ Jackman, W.J. Development of Transportation in Modern England Vol. I, p. 3.
Jusserand, J.J. English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages. p. 90.
Webb, B.&S. The Story of the King's Highway, pp. 73-6.
Gregory, W. The Story of the Road, pp. 175-177.

of road. The first Turnpike Act of significance was the 1663 Wadesmill, Caxton and Stilton Act to maintain part of the Great North Road. During the following forty years, justices in Essex, Norfolk, Surrey, Gloucester, Somerset, Cheshire, Bedfordshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire and Kent were empowered to take tolls. After 1711 the power was ^vested in Trustees who were not necessarily justices, and during the course of the century Trusts were established in increasing numbers.¹

The setting up of gates and the collection of a toll was the signal for several outbursts of rioting during the years 1714 - 54. At Bristol gates were erected in the early summer of 1727.² They were immediately destroyed by the miners of Kingswood who argued that gates were unnecessary if justices saw to their duty and enforced the upkeep of the roads. This riot is described in detail below.³ The Gloucestershire colliers rioted in 1731 when a gate was erected at Marshfield.⁴ Sir William Codrington, a magistrate, attempted to control the situation/

¹ Webb, B & S. op. cit. p. 137

² 13 George I c. 12.

³ Chapter on Kingswood: An area of riot.

⁴ 4 George II c. 23.

situation with the help of twenty servants but soon found himself taken prisoner by the mob. He was set free only after ordering the release of colliers already sent to Gloucester Jail for attacking gates. Codrington was sure that people of fortune and influence were encouraging the rioters, for bailiffs of some of the gentry had been seen drinking with rioters before the attacks began. However that might be, the attacks ceased and "the villains retired to their underground cells."¹ Three years later riots broke out in Gloucester itself when the magistrates of the City lost control of the situation and the invading country folk rioted at will. In broad daylight a country mob entered the City at the end of May 1734, destroyed a gate and processed around the streets, jeering the while at dragoons posted in front of the City Hall. The rioters destroyed the foundations of a house then being built for the Collector of the Toll and in its place substituted their own toll-collecting device and forced all people passing in and out of the City to make payment on the understanding² that this would be the last toll ever paid in Gloucester. The rioters/

¹ Sir W. Codrington to the Duke of Newcastle, July 14, 1731.
S.P. Dom 36/25.

² Deputy Mayor, Alderman and Burgesses of Gloucester to the Duke of Newcastle, May 25, 1734. S.P. Dom 36/22.

rioters wore the customary disguise of female dress, and there was no indication of their place of origin. In June a small¹ body of gate-breakers destroyed the gate at Stonchay. The keeper of the gate was warned that he would be shot if he put his face to the window - a warning which relieved him later of the unpleasant duty of identifying rioters. Otherwise, however, the latter took no pains to conceal their identity and even advertised their presence² as they went by blowing a horn and playing a fiddle.

In the same month, June 1734, a gate at Ledbury in Herefordshire was attacked. The Ledbury gate had been erected as long ago as 1722 and the Trustees gave the following account³ of their past labours in a Representation to the Duke of Chandos, Lord Lieutenant of the County: "Though with a yearly income arising from this Turnpike not exceeding three hundred and ten pounds, they have made a stone causeway for upwards of twenty miles in the several highways leading to the town of Ledbury, some/

¹ Read's Weekly Journal, June 29, 1734.

² Information of W. Bennett, Gatekeeper. June 15, 1734.
S.P. Dom 36/22.

³ Commissioners of the Turnpike at Ledbury to Chandos. June 22, 1734.
S.P. Dom 36/22.

some of which were before quite impassable; and for the more frugal management of that small income, the Acting Commissioners have not only saved (for the public service) the salaries usually given to surveyors on such occasions by taking the daily trouble and direction of the repairs upon themselves but have also every year since the Turnpikes were set up, advanced considerable sums of their own money without interest for the more speedy repairing of the roads." Despite these services, the Ledbury gates had all been demolished on June 8. The attacks had been widely advertised beforehand, and the rioters had armed themselves with guns and swords. Their leaders had assembled them in the market square at Ledbury after destroying the gates and had given public notice that they would again appear at Ledbury Fair on the following Tuesday. This had turned out to be no idle boast, for not only had the rioters appeared a second time as promised, but they had forced all passers-by to pay toll at the spots where the gates had existed on the grounds that they were paying for their future liberty. Chandos at once forwarded the letter of the Commissioners to the Duke of Newcastle and on July 18 the government issued a Proclamation against destroyers of turnpikes.¹ This was followed/

¹
Proclamation of the King in Council, July 18, 1734. S.P. Dom 36/22.
Read's Weekly Journal, July 27, 1734.

followed by the stringent 1735 Act. Both in 1728 and in 1732 (following the Bristol riots of 1727 and the Gloucester riots¹ of 1731) Acts had been passed to deter would-be attackers. The 1728 Act imposed a punishment of whipping and imprisonment for three months. This was an ineffectual penalty, and in 1732 turnpike cutters were made liable to transportation for seven years. In 1735 this was amended to a death sentence for destroyers of gates or rescuers of rioters placed in prison for attacking gates.² In addition, the Hundred in which a damaged gate was situated had to pay compensation. The most important provision of the 1735 Act was meant, however, to be that amending a stipulation of the previous Acts that the trials of persons accused were to take place in the county where the attack had been carried out. This had resulted in extreme difficulty in obtaining convictions against rioters despite clear evidence of guilt. The 1735 Act therefore made it permissible for trials of persons accused of attacking turnpikes to be removed into adjacent counties. The importance of this provision was demonstrated/

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1 George II c 19

5 George II c 33

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8 George II c 20.

demonstrated in 1736 when Judge Paxton found that at Hereford members of his Jury were visiting the prisoners accused of destroying gates. He therefore considered that prosecutions in Hereford would be ineffectual and removed all the prisoners by Habeas Corpus to Worcester to be prosecuted at the next Assizes there.¹ The removal to an adjacent county was not, however, a guarantee of an unbiased trial, as may be seen from the case of Bristol rioters who were in 1750 removed to Salisbury for trial. After two of the accused had been acquitted, the prosecution declared its unwillingness to continue and the remaining rioters were transferred for a second time to the Taunton Assizes.²

The punitive measures of the 1735 Act had no effect, and the counties of Gloucester and Hereford continued to be centres of discontent. In August 1735 troops had to be sent to the aid of Codrington at Marshfield,³ and in late September the Ledbury/

¹ N. Paxton to the Duke of Newcastle, March 24, 1736. S.P. Dom 36/38.

² Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. XX, p. 156.

³ Duke of Newcastle to the Secretary at War. August 22, 1735. Newcastle Papers. B. Mus. Add. Mss. 32690 ff 479.

Ledbury gates were again attacked.¹ Two of the rioters were caught and committed to Ross Jail but this caused the rising of a mob in an effort to rescue the prisoners.² In early January, 1736, the turnpike at Wilton near Ross was cut down and the keeper's house destroyed at night by a mob of some sixty people wearing white frocks armed and for the most part on horse-back.³ As a result the government issued a second Proclamation against destroyers of Turnpikes on February 5, 1736 "for the more effectual punishing wicked and evil disposed persons going armed in disguise" with intent to break gates.⁴ Matters were quiet in Herefordshire until 1738 when the Wilton gate was again attacked by a small body of rioters, under the leadership of a forceful character John Pendry. The latter considered that he had been unjustly treated for the part he played in the 1736 riot, and was determined to wreak vengeance by/

¹ Hardwicke to the Duke of Newcastle, September 28, 1735. Newcastle Papers. B. Mus. Add. Mss. 32690 ff 479.

² T. Williams to the Duke of Chandos, December 3, 1735. S.P. Dom 36/37.

³ Westfaling, H.R. to the Duke of Chandos. January 8, 1736. S.P. Dom 36/40. Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. VI, pp. 353, 422 and 229.

⁴ Proclamation, February 5, 1736. S.P. Dom 36/38.

by destroying the gate a second time. At the most there were eight in the mob, all servants or labourers, and the whole¹ affair was to satisfy the whim of Pendry.

The next outbreak of rioting against turnpikes occurred at Bristol in 1749 when the second Act² was passed for the setting up of Trusts around the City. The Trustees hastened to set up gates and caused an immediate disturbance in Somerset where the country folk rose on July 22. The rioters destroyed the gates at Bedminster on the Ashton Road in half-an-hour and on the following night blew up the gate on the Troghill Road, about a mile from the City. The Trustees, who were vigorous and bold men, decided to mount guard over their gates themselves and to take advantage of the fact that many country folk were coming into Bristol for the Fair by insisting on payment of the requisite toll. The farmers and labourers passed through in the morning without incident of any sort, but, after a meeting at the Fair, decided to attack the gates on the way home at night. This attack took place, but the Trustees defended themselves stoutly and actually took prisoners. On the/

¹ Duke of Chandos to the Duke of Newcastle, March 3, 1738.
H.R. Westfaling to the Duke of Chandos, March 1, 1738.

Newcastle Papers. B. Mus. Add. Mss. 32691. Vol VI ff 545.

² 22 George II c 28

the following day, however, the country folk took complete possession of the gates and warned the Trustees, who were important Bristol business men, that they would pull down the Bristol Exchange if any further attempt was made to collect tolls.

The Trustees soon regained possession of their gates with the help of a party of sailors and, such was their energy and persistence, roamed the countryside in search of rioters, who had often adopted the simple disguise of female attire. In particular the Trustees concentrated on the village of Backwell, but on their approach the male inhabitants fled to the shelter of surrounding woods.¹ The energy of the Trustees was, indeed, too much for Weekes, the Mayor of Bristol, who noticed with annoyance that the Trustees had taken it upon themselves to publish a notice requesting the citizens of Bristol to meet at the Exchange when summoned by the sounding of fire-alarms, and to defend the city against any attack from the country. Here, in fact, was a case of Turnpike authorities encroaching on the rights of magistrates, and Weekes resented the fact and reported it to Newcastle. Furthermore, he thought that the rioting as a whole was due "not only to the inveteracy of the/

¹
Bristol Journal, 1660. Saturday July 29th, 1749.

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the county people but from the indiscreet warmth and precipitate measures of the acting Trustees in carrying the Act for erecting the Turnpikes into execution."¹ A further example of the "indiscreet warmth" was given by the widespread publication of a notice from the Trustees in the countryside making known the penalties involved by breaking the 1735 Act against Turnpike Rioters. This threat merely irritated the rioters and provoked them to further action; on July 29th, the gate on the Stapleton Road was demolished, and, two days later, the rioters made a determined attempt to seize and hang a bailiff named Durbin, who had carried two of their fellows before the magistrates at Bristol. Durbin fortunately proved too wily for his pursuers who had been drinking excessively. On the 29th, too, a gate on the Whitchurch Road was destroyed and a pitched battle took place at the Brislington Gate where the Trustees, supported by a party of sailors, drove away the rioters and took some thirty prisoners.

At this point, the country folk evidently felt that they were losing the fight, for farmers went round the pits at Kingswood bribing and cajoling the colliers to give assistance. Here/

¹ Weekes to Duke of Newcastle. August 1, 1749. S.P. Dom 36/111

Here they were only partially successful for only part of the collier population left the pits and coal was supplied daily to Bristol. A mixed mob of weavers and colliers destroyed a gate on the Bath Road on August 2nd, but spent the following day roaming about the countryside becoming downhearted and tired of the whole affair.¹ Scattered attacks took place during the whole of August and September.² The country folk still seethed with discontent and threatened attacks against the Exchange. The defence of the City was, however, well organised and two Troops of Dragoons marched in on August 5th.³ A direct attack was thus out of the question. The rioters talked of starving Bristol into submission, but this was an idle threat and the rioting petered out.

In May 1752 a foretaste of events to come in the West Riding was given by the destruction in broad daylight of the gate at Selby. The townsfolk were summoned to the attack by the Town Crier. The keeper was locked in his gate-house and by/

¹ The Bristol Oracle, Vol III, No. 1662. August 5th, 1749.

² The Bristol Oracle, No. 1665. September 2, 1749.

³ Mayor of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle. August 1 and August 5, 1749.

by assiduous application of saw and spade the gate and posts¹ were removed in the course of two nights' work.

In the following year a Trust was established to repair² the road between Killinghall and Dudley in the West Riding. The setting up of gates on this road, particularly the one at Apperley Bridge near Guiseley, was the signal for an outburst of rioting. Two magistrates of Horton near Bradford, perhaps with the incident at Selby in mind, feared that rioting would follow the setting up of new gates, especially since the duty³ on coal was twice that imposed by the Trust set up in 1741. The coal duty was indeed high; as Lord Irwin, Lord Lieutenant of the County wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, "too high for the good of a trading country where cloth cannot be made without fire."⁴ The two Horton magistrates, R.G. Sawrey and S. Lister, therefore wrote to Newcastle giving him reasons for their fears and/

¹ Information of A. Row, gate-keeper, before Sir Henry Ibbotson, May 12, 1752. S.P. Dom 36/118

² 25 George II c 55

³ 14 George II c 32

⁴ Lord Irwin to the Duke of Newcastle. June 27, 1753. S.P. Dom 36/122

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and appealing for military aid. Before troops could arrive, however, large mobs had arisen, and on June 18 the gate at Apperley Bridge together with the Bradford gates on the Leeds-Halifax road were destroyed. With the new gates destroyed, the rioters turned their attention to the old. In several small parties they destroyed twelve gates and six gate-houses in and around Leeds. The Commissioners rather foolishly attempted to set up a new gate at Apperley Bridge on June 19. They were quickly forced to flee by a hastily aroused mob. The arrival shortly afterwards of a detachment of ninety men under Captain Gallantyne from York put an end to large-scale rioting, though isolated attacks continued. On June 24 a mob attacked the gate at Harewood Bridge but were soundly thrashed by a local landlord Lascelles, member of Parliament for Scarborough, who armed his tenants and took ten prisoners, who were sent to York Jail. ² At the end of June a mob attempted to destroy for a second time the gate at Beeston. Three of these rioters were captured and brought before the magistrates for/

¹
R. G. Sawrey and S. Lister to the Duke of Newcastle. June 30, 1753.
S.P. Dom 36/122.

²
Read's Weekly Journal, July 7, 1753. 1477.

for examination at an inn. The friends of the rioters gathered outside and, after a wait of three hours during which tempers rose, hurled stones through the inn windows and attempted to storm their way inside. The soldiers on guard fired and killed several of the rioters.¹ Though there was "still a great insolency of the lower people",² who threatened gate-keepers and went through without paying, this incident marked the end of large-scale rioting at Leeds.

When one remembers the large amount of turnpike legislation during the years 1714-54, turnpike rioting must seem limited. No fewer than 318 Acts of Parliament establishing Trusts were passed, the counties most affected being, in descending order of importance, Middlesex, Yorkshire, Wiltshire, Gloucester, Lancashire, Worcester, Bedford, Kent, Warwick, Northumberland, Hereford and Durham. Yet, as has been seen, there were no known riots in most of these counties, and there seems no general explanation for the appearance of riots where they did in fact occur. Carteret speaking in the House of Lords in July/

¹ Mayor and Recorder of Leeds to the Earl of Holderness.

July 1, 1753. S.P. Dom 36/122.

Gentleman's Magazine. Vol. XXIII, pp. 342-3.

² Lord Irwin to the Earl of Holderness. September 29, 1753.
S. P. Dom 36/123.

July, 1737 confessed his inability to explain the outbreak of turnpike riots in the west and not elsewhere.¹ It is possible only to examine the causes of each riot separately. The colliers of Gloucestershire in 1727 and 1731 rose against the imposition of a toll which threatened an increase in the price of the necessities of life and which offered nothing in the way of improvement save the addition of "fuzz and heath" to the surface of the roads.² Certainly the early Turnpike Trusts did not effect a marked improvement to the roads and Robert Phillips remarked in 1737 before the Royal Society that "if the Turnpikes were taken down and the roads not touched for seven years they would be a great deal better than they are now."³ In Herefordshire and Gloucestershire in 1734 and 1735 the supporters of the attacks were the farmers of the surrounding countryside who saw the gates as an expensive obstacle to their journeyings to markets and fairs.⁴ This was also the case at

Bristol/

¹ The Gentleman's Magazine, July 1737. Vol VII. pp. 108-110.

² The Colliers' Letter to the Turnpikes. July 3, 1727. Gloucester Shire Hall Archives.

³ Phillips, R. Dissertation concerning the State of the High Roads of England, 1737. quoted Gregory, op. cit. p.

⁴ Thomas Williams to Duke of Chandos, December 22, 1735. S.P. Dom 36/37.



TURNPIKE RIOTS 1714-1754

Bristol in 1749. The Leeds riots of 1753 were due principally to the imposition of a high duty on coal which was necessary for the production of cloth, though the rioters also objected to tolls on other commodities and marched along singing the following distich:-

Corn, Coals, and Lime shall all go free¹
Or else no turnpikes shall there be.

These, then, were the reasons why riots broke out where they did. That disturbances were not more widely spread is not perhaps surprising in view of the fact that turnpikes meant nothing to the poor of town or country unless they possessed a horse or cart, pedestrians always being allowed through free.² In another way, too, the trusts satisfied the poor for they created work. At Ledbury, for example, in 1740 "the meaner sort of people" had so changed their opinion of Turnpikes that "they look upon them now as their chief support and without the employment they find under them they and their families would go near to perish."³

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¹ Read's Weekly Journal, August 4, 1753. 1481.

² Webb, S. & B. op. cit. p. 124.

³ Magistrates Skipp and Biddulph to the Duke of Newcastle. October 10, 1740. Newcastle Papers, B. Mus. Add. Mss. 32695

One cannot but reflect, in conclusion, that it was fortunate indeed for the government that turnpike rioting was not general. Of all forms of riot it was undoubtedly the most difficult to counter adequately, being conducted against scattered objectives and with the sympathy of a considerable part of the population.

VI. THE GLASGOW MALT TAX RIOTS 1725

The contribution to be paid to the national revenue by Scotland had, since the end of the War of Spanish Succession, been a very vexed question.¹ It had been laid ~~down~~^{down} in the Act of Union 1707² that there was to be equality of taxation in both countries; at the same time, however, Scotland was to be exempt from contributing to war expenses. A proposal to extend the English Malt Tax to Scotland was therefore put off until 1713 when peace was imminent, but the Scots, by bringing forward a threat to agitate for the repeal of the Act of Union, managed to defeat the proposed measure. It must surely have seemed to the government that Scotland was escaping its meet share of the financial burden and Walpole endeavoured to introduce a tax on beer in 1724. He proposed to levy sixpence per barrel of ale and to remove the bounty on exports of grain from Scotland. This tax of sixpence per barrel was, unfortunately for Walpole, original/

¹ See Hume Brown Book VII, Ch. III p. 120f. pp. 164-167.

Laing: A History of Scotland, Vol. IV pp. 357-363.

Craik, H.: A Century of Scottish History, pp. 104-109.

² Article VII 6 Anne c. 11.

original in character and did not apply to England; it was therefore contrary to the Act of Union. Similarly, the decision to remove the grain bounty contravened Article VI of the Act of Union. The Scots, who saw no wrong in their own non-payment of taxes or, for example, that their parliamentary representatives were lodged at government expense - a particular government complaint - raised a great uproar against the intended measure. They argued that Scottish grain was inferior in quality to English grain and should not bear an equal tax, and that grain would as a result of the measure become a drug on the home market; the removal of the export bounty would mean a glut of grain and poverty for Scottish farmers. The government sought a way out of deadlock by negotiating with the Scottish members, and it was eventually decided to impose a tax of threepence on each bushel of malt, the tax to be collected from June 23rd, 1725.

As the day appointed drew nearer, feeling against the tax became stronger especially in the western regions where discreet¹ Excise officers thought it wise to leave the district. In Glasgow itself the situation was made uglier by the concourse of strangers, country folk, and ne'er-do-wells for the Glasgow Fair and/

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Laing, History of Scotland, Vol IV, p. 359.

and by the action of Daniel Campbell, Member of Parliament, in sending to General Wade on June 21st for military protection. Campbell had been for some time the target of the abuse and hatred of the Glasgow populace. It was believed that he had encouraged the government in the imposition of a tax on the tobacco trade with America and the West Indies which was bringing prosperity to the town and, although it was true that he had spoken against the originally proposed tax on ale in the House of Commons,¹ there was a widespread belief that he and his brother had farmed out the Malt Tax. As recently as December, 1724, a mob had broken the windows of the mansion at Shawfields which Campbell had had built for himself,² and some days before the Malt Tax riots actually began, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, George Drummond, received a report that Shawfields had been destroyed, to such an extent was Campbell's unpopularity notorious.³

It was the arrival of two Companies of Foot on the evening of June 24th in response to Campbell's request for military aid to/

¹ Woodrow Correspondence iii, 211.

² Wilson Analecta iii, p. 21.

³ Journals of the House of Commons, Vol. XX, March 18, 1726.

to protect the revenue officers and help the magistrates that roused the mob to action. As the soldiers approached the town they were pelted with stones and dirt. The road into the town, then a place of only 20,000 inhabitants, passed over an almost derelict bridge and the mob took occasion to remind the soldiers that "King George would be better occupied building a bridge than imposing the Malt Tax."¹

The Glasgow mob had in 1706 shown its capabilities in a protest against the Act of Union. It had twice forced the Provost to flee and, under the leadership of an ex-soldier Finlay, assumed complete control of the town until the arrival of over two hundred dragoons restored order. In 1725, too, it was to show itself completely beyond the bounds of magisterial control. Before Bushell the officer-in-command and his men could be accommodated at the town guard-house, the mob had themselves got possession of the building and beat off the Provost and Bailies when they approached. The Provost seemed unwilling to hasten an armed struggle, though a show of force at this point might/

¹ Journals of the House of Commons Vol. XX. March 18, 1726.
Evidence of George Drummond, Ld. Provost of Edinburgh.

might have prevented any further rioting, and asked Bushell to accept scattered billets in the town. While this was going on, another section of the mob made for Shawfields, situated in the outer suburbs and proceeded to break the windows; Campbell had fortunately left Glasgow for Edinburgh earlier the same day. The Provost and Bailies hastened to Shawfields but were stoned and forced to flee. At midnight Captain Bushell sent a sergeant to the Provost to enquire if the military could be of assistance, but help was refused on the excuse that, as the soldiers were scattered, so they would be easily overcome by the mob if they attempted to muster together. During the course of the night¹ the mob reduced Shawfields to a mere shell.

On the following day everything at first seemed quiet. Bushell was able to occupy the guard-house without opposition, and orders were issued by the Provost to the town's companies of train bands to meet at 5 p.m. to assist the regulars in the suppression of any possible tumults. Between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. a mob consisting of women and boys, got together outside the guard-house and began to hurl stones at the soldiers. The latter were ordered by/

¹
 Read's Weekly Journal, July 10, 1725
 Mist's Weekly Journal, July 10, 1725
 London Journal, July 10 and 13, 1725
 Daily Courant, July 13, 1725
 London Gazette, July 13, 1725
 for the details of the riot.

by Bushell to fire by platoons down the four main streets leading off the guard-house, and at the first volley two people were killed. This, moreover, instead of intimidating the mob, infuriated them. The alarm bell was rung and a great mob gathered quickly carrying halberts and fire-arms. To avoid bloodshed Provost Miller begged Bushell to retire from the town. With great difficulty Bushell marched out, but was so closely pressed by the raging mob that he was forced on several occasions to give the order to halt and fire, with the result that nine of the rioters were killed. The mob followed the soldiers on their way to Dumbarton, captured two of their number - who were barbarously treated as they were hustled back to Glasgow, - and sent messengers on horseback to Dumbarton to threaten the townsfolk there that, unless entry was refused the soldiers, their homes would be burnt. These threats had no effect and Bushell reached Dumbarton safely. The rioters withdrew to Glasgow, and thus the riots ended, the mob contenting itself with the stripping of all decorations, wood, and lead from Shawfields in the following days.¹ General Wade and Duncan Forbes, who had been appointed Lord Advocate about a month before the riots, arrived in Glasgow on July 8th with the Earl of Deloraine's Regiment and found everything quiet/

quiet. The ringleaders of the rioting had all vanished and when Wade and Forbes returned to Edinburgh on July 15 they took with them only twenty-one rioters, of whom nine were discharged at the preliminary examination on September 17th. The trial of the remaining twelve began on September 21st before the Lord Justice General and the other Lords of the Justiciary. James Falconer and Janet Hill were found guilty of being in arms in the mob and sentenced to transportation on October 7th and a week later a similar sentence was passed on five other prisoners, the others¹ being acquitted.

Of far great import than the trial of these unimportant unfortunates is the controversy concerning the parts played by magistrates and military during the riots. A discussion of this² controversy is, however, reserved to a more appropriate chapter. To the town itself, the riot was to prove a costly experience indeed. Not only was there the comparatively trivial payment³ of surgeons and attorneys, amounting to nearly £400 Scots, but there/

¹ Caledonian Mercury. Nos. 840, 854, 860, 862, 866.
Capt. C. Simons to Lords Justices. December 1, 1725.

² See Chapter I Part II on The Magistrate.

³ Glasgow Council Minutes. November 11, 1725 and March 11, 1726.

there was the weighty matter of compensation for Campbell who, early in March 1726, petitioned Parliament for relief of £6080 sterling to be paid by Glasgow Corporation.¹ This was granted,² and was paid in full on January 27th, 1727.

¹ Journals of the House of Commons Vol XX, March 18, 1726.

² Glasgow Council Minutes, January 27, 1727.

VII THE PORTEOUS RIOTS

The Porteous Riots had their beginnings in the execution of a smuggler Andrew Wilson of Pathhead, Fife, on April 14, 1736. Wilson was a popular figure with the mob not only by reason of his calling¹ but also because, while in jail, he had attempted a daring escape² and had actually enabled a fellow prisoner Robertson to flee successfully from St. Giles Church where they had been taken for the customary funeral sermon.³ So strong, indeed, was feeling for Wilson that the city magistrates feared there would be demonstrations by the mob at the execution and a possible attempt at rescue. On April 12th Lord Provost Wilson sent for Captain Porteous, officer in charge of the Edinburgh City Guard, and ordered him to have ready the entire Guard, about one hundred men, and to furnish his men with powder and shot.⁴ The common hangman, John Dalgliesh, was removed to/

¹ Hume Brown. History of Scotland. Vol. III, p. 174

² Caledonian Mercury, April 12th, 1736.

³ Dr Alexander Carlyle: Autobiography, pp. 34-35.

⁴ Information for Porteous at his trial. July 13, 1736.

to the Tolbooth lest he should be kidnapped and the number of sentinels guarding Wilson was doubled. General Moyle, Commander of the Forces in Scotland was also asked to send a party of Welsh Fusiliers from the Canongate into the City on the day of the execution.¹

The execution itself proceeded without incident. The City Guard guarded the gallows while the regulars were drawn up some distance away in the Lawn Market on the route from the Tolbooth to the Grassmarket. The immense crowd around the gallows behaved itself until the hangman climbed his ladder^r to cut down the body after it had hung for twenty five minutes. At the sight of Dalgleish mounting the gallows the mob thrust forward as if at a preconceived signal. Some forced their way through the Guard, cut down the body and hastened away with it in a cart to Leith where unsuccessful attempts were made to restore life; others attacked the Guard and prevented any recapture of the body by hurling stones and filth. Two of the Guard had shoulder blades fractured and, in desperation, their fellows fired into the air, unfortunately killing several spectators in the windows of buildings overlooking the gallows.²

Porteous/

¹ Examination of Major Pool of the Welsh Fusiliers before the House of Lords. B. M. Add. Mss. 33049 f 88.

² Examination of Bailie Hamilton. Newcastle Papers B.M. Add. Mss. 33049 f 27.

Porteous formed his men into rank and marched them slowly up the steep West Bow. At the bend of the hill the mob became so furious in their attacks that the rear rank turned and fired straight into the rioters who fell back. The Guard then marched unmolested through the files of regulars to the Guard House, a low building situated between St. Giles and the Tolbooth Prison.¹

Such are the bare unvarnished facts of the first Porteous Riot. Unvarnished, because contemporary accounts such as that contained in the "Caledonian Mercury", the Edinburgh daily, ascribed the unfortunate deaths to the malicious fury of Porteous, and were correspondingly warped in their narratives of the incident. Porteous, indeed, became the target for an abuse and hate which culminated six months later in his death. One may appreciate contemporary feeling by reading the virulent pages of the "Mercury" or pamphlets such as that published in 1737 by an anonymous author entitled "The Life and Death of Captain John Porteous", wherein Porteous is depicted as a very devil incarnate. Even Dr Carlyle, writing sixty years after the riot,² condemned Porteous out of hand for a brutal drunken slaughter/

¹ Caledonian Mercury 2502, April 15th, 1735.

² Carlyle, A. Autobiography pp. 36 - 38.

slaughter and repeated the gossip that Porteous lost his temper because of a strange jealousy of the regular troops who had been specially ordered into the city - though, as has already been pointed out, the regulars merely lined part of the route to the gallows and left the position of honour, if one may so term it, around the gallows to the City Guard.

Porteous was the son of a tailor in the Canongate¹ but, having failed to settle down to his father's trade, joined a corps of the Scots Dutch in Holland during the War of the Spanish Succession. He returned to Edinburgh in 1714 and was able to take advantage of the Jacobite scare when the city guards were increased and train bands and volunteers given arms to become drill master of the new levies. He performed his duties so well that he was appointed adjutant to the town's train bands. In 1718 he became an Ensign and in 1726 one of the three captain-lieutenants of the City Guard, a body of about one hundred men divided into three Companies. Traditionally the Guard were on bad terms with the scum of the City/

¹ Act of the Town Council. March 13, 1695, admitting S. Porteous to be burgess and guild brother. Edinburgh City Archives. Roughhead, W. The trial of Captain Porteous, pp. 4-7.

City, and an annual scuffle, depicted by the poet Fergusson,¹ took place between the two on the King's Birthday. It was not to be expected that an officer of the Guard would be a popular figure and Porteous was undoubtedly quick-tempered and proud, on one occasion even coming to blows with a brother officer at a meeting of the Town Council. As an expert golfer he had acquired some familiarity with the golfing aristocracy and well-to-do of Edinburgh, and this would seem to have heightened both the envy of the mob of the High Street and the Captain's personal arrogance. His efficiency as an officer was never in doubt, and he was described after his death as "the standing terror of the mob by reason of his courage, strength and vigilance."²

Immediately after the riot Porteous and fifteen of the City Guard were ordered into custody by the Lord Provost. Such indeed was the magisterial fear of the anger of the mob that Wilson and his fellow magistrates actually thought of using their powers as sheriff and deputy-sheriffs to try Porteous immediately for murder on the plea that the Lords of Justiciary were absent on/

¹ The King's Birthday in Edinburgh - Robert Fergusson.

² Roughead, W.S. Trial of Captain Porteous pp. 3 - 20.

on circuit and that unnecessary delay would be caused if Porteous were to be tried by the High Court. Fortunately for themselves they took the precaution of addressing a Memorial and Queries concerning the validity of their intended step to the Lord Advocate, Duncan Forbes, and the Solicitor General, Charles Erskine.¹ It is interesting to note from the questions posed that the Provost and Bailies were not so much worried about the legality of the proposed trial but feared chiefly that Porteous might object to the trial by his immediate superiors on the grounds that his orders to fire had been received directly from them.² Forbes and Erskine, replying from London on May 6th,³ made it quite clear that the Sheriff and Under-Sheriffs had no power whatsoever to try summarily except in the case of a murderer caught red-handed and provided that the trial took place within three days of the murder; also, that it would be most unwise if the Provost and Bailies were to undertake such a trial if it was suspected that Porteous was going/

¹ Memorial and Queries touching the Jurisdiction of the Provost and Magistrates to take trial of murders committed by Captain Porteous and part of the City Guard under his command. Edinburgh City Archives.

² *ibid.* Query 4.

³ Answers to the Queries. London May 6, 1736. Edinburgh City Archives.

going to make such an objection. Taking these legal admonitions to heart the Town Council had no choice but to order a criminal prosecution before the High Court against Porteous, who had¹ already been dismissed from his offices of Captain of the Guard, Adjutant to the Train Bands, and Provisor of coal and candle.² The fifteen members of the guard who had been imprisoned at the same time were never brought to trial and were allowed to go free, to such an extent was hatred concentrated against the hapless Porteous.³

The trial began on July 5th before Lord Justice-Clerk Fletcher of Milton and Lords Royston, Dun, Newhall and Minto. The charge against Porteous was that, with a wicked and malicious purpose of killing spectators at the execution of Wilson, he had given the order to fire and had himself shot and killed one Charles Husband; further, that he had given a second order to fire at the turning of the West Bow. Two weeks were spent in legal debate and quibbles on the relevancy of the charge, and a jury of fifteen consisting of a mixture of local landowners/

¹ Town Council Minutes May 12th 1736. Edinburgh City Archives.

² Town Council Minutes April 21st 1736. Edinburgh City Archives.

³ The Lord Provost's Examination before the House of Lords. Newcastle Papers, B.M. Add. Ms. 33049 f 27.

landowners and city tradesmen, was not empanelled until July 19th. During the whole of that day evidence was heard from witnesses for the Crown and for the pannel, and it is at once obvious from an examination of the depositions that there was a complete muddle of opinion about two vital questions, firstly, the nature of the attack by the mob on the City Guard and, secondly, the behaviour and actions of Porteous himself during the riots. Witnesses for the prosecution swore that the mob attack was not violent and that Porteous had not only roared out the order to fire but had clearly picked out and shot at Husband; witnesses for Porteous described the mob attack as definitely dangerous, with stones the size of two fists flying at the guards and described Porteous as carrying a cane throughout the whole affair. Three of his own men came forward to swear that they had heard Porteous cry out "Do not fire". The impression finally left on one by a study of the depositions is that the attack of the mob was a violent one but that Porteous gave no order to fire and did not himself shoot.¹

On July 20th by a majority of eight votes to seven, Porteous was found guilty of firing at the populace and of giving/

¹ Indictment and Defence of Porteous. Reprinted in Roughead op. cit. pp. 145-187.

giving the order from which further firing took place. He was sentenced to be hanged on September 8th.

At this point, however, Porteous found that his influential friends were rallying round him. These friends advised him to petition Queen Caroline¹ - George II then being in Hanover - while individuals wrote to influential people like General Wade² on his behalf. Two further petitions, signed by nearly seventy members of the nobility were prepared and ready for sending up when on September 2nd, the reprieve for six weeks from the original date of execution arrived at Edinburgh. The reaction of the populace was, in the opinion of the Lord Justice-Clerk, one of "general approbation, especially among those of the higher rank and greatest distinction. And the few who grumble are only of the meaner sort."³ How mistaken this observation was appeared in the following days. Even before the reprieve arrived rumours had gone around the city of a riot to hang Porteous on the day originally appointed. These rumours spread to Glasgow, Stirling, Perth and had even reached London by/

¹Petition of John Porteous. State Papers (Scotland). George II 23/4.

² Petition of Noblemen and Gentlemen of Scotland. Society of Antiquities.

³ Roughead, op. cit. p. 69.

by the morning after the night of the actual hanging.¹ The member for the city, Patrick Lindsay, was several times told of the intended riot² and Captain Lind of the City Guard twice³ approached Wilson to warn him of the probability of an attack. Wilson dismissed the rumour as "common chatter among common servants and children",⁴ as, of course, did many others including Porteous himself.

On September 7th, the eve of the day on which Porteous was to have been hanged a mob of people - "from the country" according to the Caledonian Mercury which naturally wanted to think the rioters were not citizens, - rushed through the West Port a few minutes before ten o'clock at night. Quickly the rioters secured the Cowgate and Netherbow Ports, thus isolating the city, stormed the Guard House and seized all the fire-arms contained therein. In a surprisingly orderly fashion the/

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- ¹ Examination of General Wade. B.M. Add. MS 33049 f 91.
 - ² Examination of ^{Patrick Lindsay}~~Captain Lind~~ B.M. Add. MS 33049 f 69.
 - ³ Examination of ^{Captain Lind}~~Ld. Provost Wilson~~. B.M. Add. MS. 33049 f ⁶⁹27.
 - ⁴ Depositions of John Ure and others. Edinburgh City Chambers.

the mob proceeded to the Tolbooth Prison where Porteous was incarcerated and attempted in vain to batter down the doors. Finally they set fire to the doors and gained entry in about an hour's time. Porteous was dragged out and hustled to the Grassmarket where he was with much brutality hanged over a¹ dyer's pole. The Provost and Bailies who had been supping at Clerk's Tavern made one attempt to quell the riot, but retired hurriedly when the rioters showed their intention of resisting any attempt at intervention. By some pathetic chance the Town Guard numbered only fifteen on this night and, as a result of the mob's invasion of the Guard House, were without muskets or powder and shot. The Provost decided to send Lindsay, Member of Parliament, to General Moyle at Abbey Hill with a request that he should send troops in through the Netherbow Port. This, however, was of no avail for, in the first place, Lindsay had great difficulty in getting out of the city/

¹
Caledonian Mercury 2565 September 9, 1736.
17381 September 13, 1736.
There is no concrete evidence for the acts of consideration ascribed to the mob by Scott in "The Heart of Midlothian". (Border Edition Vol I. 1893).

city and, when he eventually reached Abbey Hill, found that Moyle refused to give assistance without the authority of the Lord Justice-Clerk or Lords of the Justiciary.¹ In any case, Porteous was dead before Lindsay reached Abbey Hill. A more pathetic story was later revealed by General Wade who informed the House of Lords that a hundred soldiers under the command of a Major Robertson at the Castle actually watched the flames burning down the gates of the Tolbooth Prison and waited in vain² for an appeal to intervene from the magistrates.

The identity of the mob is one of the puzzles of history. Despite the fact that Provost Wilson and his colleagues wandered for a brief while amongst the rioters on a fine moonlit night, few people were recognised and against only one of these, William McLauchlan, was a charge of being accessory to the murder brought.³ At the same time it is perhaps significant that some seventy journeymen and apprentices were missing from Edinburgh/

¹ Examination of Patrick Lindsay. M.P. B.M. Add. MS. 33049.f 69.

² Examination of General Wade. B.M. Add. MS. 33049. f 91.

³ Criminal Trials illustrative of the Heart of Midlothian. Edinburgh 1818.

Edinburgh after the riot;¹ This also fits in with the Solicitor-General's discovery that James Maxwell, a servant who had testified against Porteous at his trial, was known "to have come to a shop upon the Friday before (September 3rd, the day of the news of the reprieve) and charged the journeymen and prentices there to attend in the Parliament Close on Tuesday night to assist hang Porteous."² A second cause for wonder is the systematic way in which the members of the mob went about their business. In the locking of the city gates so that they were isolated, in their use of fire buckets at the Tolbooth Prison to prevent the fire spreading, in the singleness of purpose with which they concentrated on the hanging of Porteous and on that alone - there was no looting of any kind - the Porteous rioters are indeed remarkable. Even allowing for the fact that they were well blessed with luck in that Wilson and his fellow magistrates were men of weak character, that Moyle refused to enter the city, and that Wilson failed to apply to the Castle force, they must nevertheless appear as one of the best disciplined and efficient mobs of history.

¹ Roughead, op. cit. p. 113.

² Solicitor-General to General Wade. 14 December 1736.
S.P. Dom 36/39.

VIII. JACOBITE RIOTS.

The Proclamation of George I throughout Britain during the early days of August, 1714, was greeted, according to the London newspapers which carefully traced reception from town to town, with almost universal joy.¹ Even the "Flying Post", the most sensitive and suspicious Hanoverian organ and the main source of information on popular disturbances for 1714 and 1715, could record nothing of an untoward nature save in Scotland. Here rioting had taken place, but on a small scale.

The Proclamation at Glasgow had occasioned the rising of a mob which invaded the Episcopal Meeting House, broke down all the pews, carried the pulpit and Common Prayer Book through the streets and finally burnt both at a bonfire.² A contemporary suggested that the Episcopalians of Glasgow had themselves engineered the riot in order that the Presbyterians might fall into bad odour.³ This would seem an unduly tortuous explanation of the disturbance, particularly when the bitter feeling existing between Episcopalians and Presbyterians for/

¹ See "The Post Boy", "Daily Courant", "Evening Courant" "Flying Post" and other papers for the first two weeks of August.

² "The Post Boy" 3009 August 19th, 1714.

³ Egmont Mss. (H. Mss. Comm. 1923) p. 494. J.M. Gregory to the Earl of Oxford September 11th, 1714.

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for years before 1714 is remembered. At Aberdeen a small Jacobite mob paraded the streets during the early hours of the day appointed for the Proclamation there. The rioters proclaimed the Pretender. On the evening of the same day a rabble of apprentices and young lads marched around the town breaking windows illuminated in honour of George I by loyal Hanoverian supporters.¹ A mob at Dundee also demonstrated against known Hanoverians. The situation here was indeed interesting. The magistrates and many of the members of the Corporation were members of an Episcopal Meeting House where ministers and congregation had refused to pray for Queen Anne and the Protestant Succession. On June 10th, 1714, the magistrates had publicly toasted the health of James VIII at Dundee Cross.² On January 20th, 1715, the day appointed for the celebration of George's peaceful accession they forbade the ringing of bells and on May 28th, 1715, the King's Birthday, refused to allow citizens to appear in the streets under penalty of a forty pound fine.³ If large scale riots might have been expected anywhere it was here.

*The/

¹ *ibid.*

² Murdoch Mackintosh. *History of Dundee.* p. 160.

³ *Flying Post* 3547. September, 1714. *Scots Courant* 1495 June 4th, 1715.

*The Jacobitism of Dundee was however restricted to the City. Fathers and land owners; the greater part of the towns folk was stolidly neutral. Possibly the memory of Monk's treatment of Dundee remained too fresh to encourage a large demonstration. In any case, this was the sum total of disturbance recorded at George's Proclamation.

The entry of George I into the kingdom on September 20 was heralded everywhere with acclamation. The journey from Greenwich to London was made through cheering crowds and with a great ringing of bells in the City.¹ At Bristol, too, the bells rang out and the people roared their approval round a bonfire on Brandon Hill.² Thousands of weavers, sheermen, combers and clothiers gathered at Devizes to celebrate the event³, while at Durham over five thousand country folk gathered to participate in merry-making which included the roasting of an ox presented by a local worthy, John Austin.⁴

It/

*It is interesting to record that in July, 1715, five magistrates were sentenced by the Lords of the Justiciary at Edinburgh for disloyalty, and forbidden to hold office. Furthermore that as late as 1775 there was a flourishing Non-Juror Church at Dundee. See the First History of Dundee (1776) from mss. of Alex. Nicoll pp. 160-161. For further information concerning the nature of Jacobitism in North East Scotland see G.P. Insh. The Scottish Jacobite Movement Book IV pp. 115-136.

¹ Daily Courant 4027 September 20 and 4028 September 21.

² Flying Post 3546 September 23 - 25, 1714.

³ Flying Post 3547 September 28, 1714.

⁴ Daily Courant 4034 September 28, 1714.

It was not until October that any hostile feeling became apparent in London. Throughout the month an increasing number of anti-government and Jacobite ballad singers appeared in the streets and small brawls became fairly frequent.¹ There were no large riots, however, and the Coronation on October 20th took place without disturbance.² It was left to Bristol to provide the outrage, and London newspapers on the days following the Coronation provided readers with horrified accounts of Jacobite activities in the West. So much, indeed, was made of the Bristol Riots by Hanoverians that it is necessary to examine them in detail.

At dusk on October 20th a small mob at Bristol appeared before the house of ^abaker, Stephen - a wealthy and ardent Whig - and claimed that he kept within his house an effigy of Dr. Sacher^{verell}well. This effigy Stephen was supposed to jeer at from time to time. Stephen offered to show the mob his house, but this in now way pacified them and it soon became clear/

¹ Flying Post 3549 September 30th and following numbers.

² "The Bristol Riot"

"A Full and Impartial Account of the Disorders in Bristol" } Bristol Public Library.

Both published in London 1714 by an anonymous attendant of the Commission of Oyer & Terminer.

clear that they were determined to plunder and steal. Stephen therefore decided to resist their entry and his son, a West Indies Captain, let fly at the rioters as they rushed into the bakery. The mob turned tail immediately and fled, leaving one of their number dead. The rioters did not disperse, however, but proceeded to the house of an Under-sheriff, Whiting. Whiting had been warned of their attack, and had prepared tables of cake and ale for their refreshment. This blunted the fury of the mob and gave Whiting time to identify the rioters. From Whiting the mob went on to the Customs House where the Customs Officers were entertaining the ladies of Bristol at a Ball. The mob flung stones through the windows but fled at the appearance of the officers and their servants and finally dispersed.¹ The real tragedy of the night was the murder of a Quaker Thomas who attempted to pacify the mob and was trampled to death for his pains. All in all, however, the riots would seem comparatively innocuous.^u/

² "The Bristol Riot") Bristol
 "A Full and Impartial Account of the Disorders) Public
 in Bristol". Library
 Both published in London 1714 by an anonymous
 attendant of the Commission of Oyer & Terminer.

innocuous. The visits to Stephen, Whiting and the Customs House needed no political interpretation, for there was reason enough without delving into politics why the mob should give expression to these particular dislikes. Stephen was not only a baker; he was also a tax collector. Whiting as an Under-Sheriff was a symbol of discipline, and the Customs Officers were as unpopular in Bristol as everywhere else at this time. The Whigs of Bristol and London were however, or pretended to be, really alarmed at these "Jacobite" mobs and a Commission of Oyer and Terminer arrived late in November to try the eighteen prisoners apprehended for rioting. The arrival of the Members of the Commission¹ and their attendants at the city boundary was the occasion of an amusing passage-at-arms between the Whigs and Tories of Bristol who had ridden out to escort the members into the City. The Tories claimed the right of heading the procession and did so in high spirits until they found themselves alone in Radcliffe Street, the Whigs having taken the Commissioners down/

¹ Sir Littleton Powis, Judge of the King's Bench.
 Robert Tracey, Esq., Judge of the King's Bench.
 Robert Price, Baron of the Exchequer.

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down St. Thomas Street. This tactical defeat enraged the Tories and encouraged them to utter unseemly cries at the Whigs.

The Members of the Commission were, fortunately, of a less excitable nature and, after a trial lasting four days six of the eighteen prisoners were acquitted, the remaining twelve being sentenced to a fine of twenty nobles and imprisonment for three months.¹ An ardent Whig follower of the members was not, however, inclined to let the matter die so easily and published a condemnation of the Jacobites of Bristol in a small pamphlet entitled "The Bristol Riot". This was received with such mirth by the Tories of Bristol that the writer felt bound to restate his case in a later pamphlet "A full and impartial account of the disorders in Bristol".² These allegations of Jacobite intrigues made, as has been shown, without basis, were only too common at the time and tend to make the historian tread warily when confronted with alleged Jacobite activities.

The/

¹ The Post Boy 3052 Nov. 27 - 30, 3054 Dec. 2 - 4
Daily Courant 4090 Dec. 2.

² "The Bristol Riot" London 1714.) Bristol
"A full and impartial Account of the Disorders) Public
in Bristol" London 1714.) Library.

The Government, nevertheless, took a sufficiently serious view of the London street brawls and of the Bristol riots to issue a Proclamation against Rioters on November 2.¹ This reminded Peace Officers that by Statute Law (13 Henry IV) it was ordained that two or three magistrates and the Sheriff or Under-Sheriff should organise the posse comitatus to deal with disturbances if necessary. Further, that all magistrates should see to it that the duties of watch were being performed efficiently. At the same time an attempt was made in London by the City authorities to clear the street of pamphlet sellers who were supposedly at the bottom of the street brawls in London.² On December 6 a second Proclamation was issued for putting the Laws in execution against Papists and Non-Jurors on the grounds that rioting had "lately been promoted and encouraged by Papists and Non-Jurors in favour of the Pretender".³

These actions are better regarded as being of a preventive nature rather than as indicative of a widespread state of riot. It is true that "The Flying Post" of May 28, 1715/

¹ London Gazette 5274 November 2.

² Daily Courant 4083 November 24.

³ London Gazette 5284 December 7.

1715 made the statement that "The Nation can never forget the riots, murders, etc., committed by that faction all over the Kingdom on the days of His Majesty's Accession, Entry and Coronation under the patronage of the word Church". This, however, (a typical "Flying Post" assertion) completely falsified the state of affairs at the Accession and Entry and considerably magnified the disturbances on Coronation Day. The facts themselves - as reported in the newspapers of August, September and October - do not warrant the statement. Another reason for believing that these early months were in the main peaceful ones arises from an examination of a document presented to the Treasury in 1734 and in 1740 by Thomas Wells, a former Clerk in the Post Office.¹ Wells had worked in the General Letter Department from 1706 on. He lived in Earl's Court off Bow Street, a quarter particularly favoured by Roman Catholics. In April 1715 he approached Craggs, the Postmaster General, at his house in Jermain Street and offered to supply regular information concerning the secret designs and/

¹ West Papers Add Mss. 34,729 f 29) (1065-1759)

and intended riots on the Pretender's behalf. From this time on Wells claimed, in his memorandum, that he was used by Craggs as a Spy, and in 1734 and 1740 sought payment for these services. Wells may or may not have been genuine; what matters is his historical outline of riots in the early years of George's reign. This outline, accurate in its detail, would surely have included the alleged riots of 1714 had they amounted to anything. Of the early months of 1715 he remarks "there was little more to be observed amongst them (the Jacobites) than their privately dispersing scandalous and seditious libels to corrupt the minds of His Majesty's honest subjects". This was true, and it was really the extent of Jacobite activities in 1714 as well. From an examination of such facts as were reported in London newspapers it would appear safe to conclude with Smollett that "on the whole, King George ascended the throne of Great Britain in the fifty fifth year of his age without the least opposition or sign of popular discontent." ¹

After/

¹ Smollett, History of England Vol II p.296.

After the lull of the first quarter of 1715, street demonstrations became numerous in April.¹ The anniversary of Queen Anne's ^{Coronation} Birthday, April 23, was the signal for the gathering of a mob at the conduit on Snow Hill. Large quantities of wine were drunk around a barrel and flag. The mob, suitably heated, roamed the streets ordering all householders to illumine their windows. Stones were thrown through windows which remained without candles. The rioters roamed from Snow Hill to Holborn Bar on one side to the City on the other, crying "God Bless the Queen" and "High Church". The "Flying Post" observed in its report of these activities that it was gradually becoming a meritorious and fashionable art in the City to mob for the Church, and alleged that chief among the offenders were members of the City of London Common Council. Further - a charge fairly frequently repeated throughout the summer by the "Flying Post" - that many of the rioters were Charity School Children, taught to riot by their disaffected teachers. The "Flying Post" also observed that magistrates and constables showed themselves not nearly efficient/

¹ Flying Post 3636 April 23-26.

efficient enough in the suppression of street brawls.¹ The cause of the outbreaks was undoubtedly the attack threatened by the Government on Ormond and Harley, and it was in the early days of May, 1715 that the cry "High Church and Ormond" first became popular with mobs.²

Throughout May rumours spread around the City concerning the great riots that would occur on May 28th and 29th. May 28th was George I's birthday. The following day marked the anniversary of the restoration of Charles II, and was seized on by ardent Jacobites as a suitable day of celebration in opposition to the 28th which they ostentatiously ignored to the annoyance of loyal Hanoverians. The very proximity of the days made rioting probable, and as early as May 14th the Justices for the City of Westminster issued orders to the High and Petty Constables, the Beadles and Watchmen of the City for the street prevention of riots and for the apprehension of libels against the King and the Government. It was arranged that, until further notice, the magistrates would assemble at pre-arranged spots so that they might be easily summoned in case of riot. They planned their week as follows.

Mondays/

¹ Flying Post 3636 April 23-26, 1715.

² Flying Post 3651 May 28-31, 1715. See also Sharpe R.F. Longon and the Kingdom Vol. iii p. 5.

Mondays St. Martin's at the School House.

Tuesdays St. James - at the Vestry.

Wednesdays St. Clement's, and the Savoy.

Thursdays St. Margaret's - at the Vestry.

Fridays Covent Garden - at the Vestry.

Saturdays St. Anne's at St. Martin's School.¹

It may be remarked here that these precautions were entirely successful and, while there were disturbances in London at the end of May, Westminster remained quiet.

On May 28, as expected, mobs roamed the London ^SStreets shouting "High Church" and "Ormond" and breaking windows which showed illuminations. Constables who attempted to restrain the rioters were beaten and in some cases severely wounded.² At Highgate a High Church mob entered the Presbyterian Meeting House, carried off the casements of the windows and damaged the pews. Another mob cut away the bell ropes of Aldergate Church in order that no peals might be rung in celebration. The most serious account of these riots/

¹ Flying Post 3645 May 14-17, 1715.

² The Flying Post May 28, 1715 3651.

riots comes from a constable of Cheap Ward, John Blackwell. Blackwell claimed that he had been brought information of a definite plan to raise three mobs at Cheapside, at Whitechapel and at Smithfield. These mobs were to assemble and march to the Bank of England under the leadership of persons of distinction.¹ Blackwell also stated that he had raised and equipped a band of followers, and had routed the mob at Cheapside, that he had taken twenty-eight rioters prisoner, and that by so doing he had nipped the whole plot in the bud as the mobs at Whitechapel and at Smithfield dispersed when they heard of the defeat of their brethren at Cheapside. It may be, of course, that Blackwell exaggerated the importance of his actions. There is, on the other hand, little doubt that he did disperse a Cheapside mob. The following paragraph from the "Flying Post" of June 4, 1715 refers to him thus: "They (the Jacobites) are desired to ask their mob how they liked the Sunday's sport and pastime of being drubbed and dispersed by an honest City constable and a few assistants on the 29th of May last at night when they made a/

¹ Statement of John Blackwell, Constable of the Ward of Cheap. S.P. Dorn 35/6. c.f. Christopher Layer's plot of 1722 for a similar plan of action.

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a riot in Cheapside and assaulted him on his watch".¹

When all is said and done - and making full allowance for the hysterical outburst of Hanoverian newspapers - the London riots of May 28th and 29th do not seem to have amounted to much, and attention at the beginning of June was soon diverted to the more serious riots in Lancashire and the North West Midlands. There was a slight skirmish at White-chapel on June 10, the Pretender's Birthday, but mob action in London had been discouraged by strict measures such as the whippings accorded to three leaders of the riots at the beginning of June.² The Abingdon Bargeman, the Butcher of Brentford, and Bournois the Frenchman had all been horribly whipped at the cart's tail for their part in leading street brawls. Active Jacobitism had had little success in London and had shot its bolt by the beginning of June, 1715.

At Manchester trouble had started on May 5 when unknown townsfolk proclaimed the Pretender King. On May 28 all celebrations by loyal Hanoverians had been suppressed by street mobs. The twenty soldiers on duty were quite insufficient/

¹ For a more detailed discussion of Blackwell see Chapter II Part II on "The Constable".

² The Flying Post June 11, 1715 3657.

insufficient to exercise control; in any case they were rendered impotent by instructions to use powder only. On May 29 oak leaves were commonly worn in the streets and the day marked the beginning of a series of attacks in Lancashire and the North West Midland counties on Dissenting Meeting Houses. During June, July and August at least thirty attacks were carried out to the widespread destruction of Meeting Houses in these regions.

On May 29 at Manchester a mob under the leadership of a notorious Jacobite Tom Syddal, a whig maker, - who was executed in 1716 for his part in the Jacobite Rebellion 1715 - ¹ attacked the great Cross Street Chapel, built to hold 1500 in 1694.² The rioters attempted to burn the building down, but without success. Further attacks were made on June 5 and 6, when all window panes were destroyed and Manchester Jail was broken into. Here had been imprisoned a soldier for crying "Down with the Rump". The final/

¹ Tom Syddal sentenced at Lancaster Assizes 1715 for rioting. Captured at Preston and executed Feb. 11, 1716. Head exposed at Preston Gate until 1745.

See (1) Memorials of a Dissenting Chapel. T. Baker pp. 21 & 22.

(2) Mss. Diary of Edmund Harold Mun. A. 2. 137 Chetham's Library, Manchester.

² Drysdale A.H. History of the Presbyterians in England. p. 444.

final attacks on Cross St. Chapel took place on June 9, 10 and 11. These left a mere shell of a building.¹ All interior furniture was removed and burnt. The small detachment of the Earl of Stair's Regiment quartered at Manchester was quite unable to restore order and the magistrates did not show to advantage. However, three troops of Lord Cobham's Dragoons from neighbouring towns were marched to Manchester and arrived under Major Wyvil on June 22. With the arrival of the Dragoons in Manchester rioting came to an end.² An attempt to riot on June 23 was quickly stamped out, and there was no further trouble here.³

The destruction of Cross Street Meeting House had been followed by attacks on Meeting Houses around Manchester. On June 13 the Meeting Houses at Monton and Houghton near Eccles were attacked, as were those at Blakely, Greenacres, Failsworth and Standing on June 20 and 21.⁴ The Monton Meeting House was attacked for a second time on June 21, the mob on this/

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- ¹ The Palatine Note Book for 1882 Vol. II pp 240-244.
The Lancashire Riots of 1715. Nightingale: Lancashire Nonconformity or Sketches, Historical and Descriptive of the Congregational and Old Presbyterian Churches in the Country. P. 97.
Flying Post 3730 Nov. 29.
- ² Post Boy 4040 June 21-23. Daily Courant July 5. 4273
- ³ Flying Post 3663 June 25.
- ⁴ The Palatine Note Book for 1882. Vol. II pp. 240-244.
Testimony of J. Aldred, Clerk. English Mss. 1031.
John Rylands Library.

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this occasion being led by two magistrates.¹ Further attacks^{followed} on June 21 and 22 on Meeting Houses at Platt and at Pilkington. The mobs numbered between sixty and three hundred, and attacked with the customary cries of "Down with the Rump" and "Church and King".² The last disturbance in Lancashire took place on June 25 outside Wigan, but this half-hearted attack was easily repulsed. On the same day, however, a mob rose at Wolverhampton, it being Fair Day, and attempted to raze a Meeting House there to the ground. The Dissenting Minister Stubbs was requested to leave the town by his friends, and thirty armed Dissenters took up position around his house that the mob might not damage it.³

In the early weeks of July attacks on Meeting Houses in the North West Midlands became common. On July 2 a country mob came into Worcester to demolish the Meeting House there, but were repulsed by the Dissenters who had received warning of the attack. A second attack was made from the Direction of Pitchcroft on July 12 but the constables had organised a posse and the rioters were soon dispersed.⁴ Rioting at Shrewsbury/

¹ Nightingale B. Lancashire Nonconformity Vol V pp. 4, 33
99, 236.

² Poem by Aston quoted p.32 of R. Wade: Rise of Non-conformity in Manchester.

³ St. James Post 70 July 4.

⁴ Flying Post 3672 July 16.

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Shrewsbury began on July 2. After three nights' work, the Meeting House there (which had cost £800 to build) was pulled down. The rioters, many of whom were dressed in female attire,¹ "were aroused to action against the Dissenters on two counts. Firstly, that the Dissenters had shown great loyalty and joy" during the celebrations of George's birthday and secondly because of the satisfaction the Dissenters were alleged to have shown at the impeachment of Ormond and Harley.² On July 7 the mob had the effrontery to carry on their destruction in the middle of the day. These were ordered to jail by the Mayor and Justices but no sooner had the news of their apprehension spread around the town than a mob rose, broke into the jail, extracted the prisoners and carried them around the streets shoulder high ending up with a demonstration against the magistrates outside the Court of Exchequer.³ The Meeting House at Stourbridge was gutted on July 8th⁴, as were Houses at Newcastle under Lyme⁵, Walsall⁶, Whitchurch⁷, Burton/

¹ Flying Post 3669 July 9.

² Flying Post 3671 July 14.

³ ⁴ ibid. and Indictment of E.D. Collins Oxford Circuit
1715 Crown Books Assizes 2/5.

⁵ Flying Post 3672 July 16.

⁶ Indictment of Thomas Hodgkins Oxford Circuit 1715.
Crown Books Assizes 2/5.

⁷ Crown Books Oxford Circuit 1715. Assize Books 2/5.

Burton on Trent¹ and Leake.² In most cases the furniture was extracted and burnt and, as in Lancashire, the mobs showed care in removing the chapel bells. The Meeting House at Lichfield was burnt to the ground at 3 a.m. on July 10.³ Three days later a mob attacked the Meeting House at West Bromwich, but the Dissenters there had organised themselves in preparation for an attack and beat off the first attack, taking thirty-six prisoners. On the following night a mob attacked the Birmingham Meeting House. The Proprietors of the West Bromwich and Birmingham Meeting Houses, together with those of the Meeting Houses at Dudley and Oldbury, had sought legal advice concerning the propriety of armed defence of their buildings. They had obtained a warrant from a magistrate, Sir Henry Gough, to the constable of West Bromwich ordering him to take care of having such a watch and ward as might be sufficient to ward off rioters. The result of these preparations was a pitched battle on the night of July 15. The rioters destroyed the Meeting/

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- ¹ Indictment of W. Cantrill and others. Oxford Circuit 1715
Crown Books Assizes 2/5.
- ² Indictment of T. Hazlett. Oxford Circuit 1715. Crown
Books Assizes 2/5.
- ³ Flying Post 3672 July 16.

Meeting House at West Bromwich before being chased into the country. Both sides were armed with swords and firearms and casualties were heavy - thirty killed and over fifty wounded.¹ On the following night three Meeting Houses in and around Birmingham were pulled down. At Wem the Meeting House was destroyed on July 13², while at Stafford on July 15 a mob armed with sticks and stones entered the Meeting House and destroyed the galleries and sixty pews.³ On the following day the Wrexham mob gutted the Presbyterian Meeting House and pulled down the Anabaptist chapel.⁴ Meeting Houses at Burton and Uttoxeter were destroyed in the following week⁵, and the movement petered out at the end of July and the beginning of August with attacks at King's Norton, Leake and Congleton.⁶ At the beginning of August it was remarked by "The Flying Post" that "All the Meeting Houses in this county (Staffordshire) are destroyed by mobs, except one within/

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- 1 Flying Post 3672 July 16.
St. James' Evening Post 24 July 23.
Flying Post 3675 July 23. See Chapter on "The Posse Comitatus" for the legal aspect of this affair.
 - 2 Flying Post 3672 July 16.
 - 3 Oxford Circuit. Crown Books. Assizes 2/5. Indictment against Thomas Jacobson and others.
 - 4 Flying Post 3676 July 26.
 - 5 Flying Post 3679 Aug. 2.
 - 6 St. James' Post 30. Aug. 6.

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within two miles of Lichfield which is so much threatened that the seats were taken out of it some time since to prevent their falling into the hands of the mob".¹ The Government, however, had already decided on measures to deal with the rioters. On July 19 the Commons had listened to an account of the rioting from Baylie, M.P. for Staffordshire² and three days later the Earl of Uxbridge left for the disaffected area with a strong body of troops.³ From this time on the movement was doomed. The Government issued two Proclamations against rioters on July 25 and July 27⁴, and the outbreak was the direct cause of the framing of the Riot Act which came into force on August 1, 1715.⁵ Nevertheless by August the rioters had shot their bolt, and there remained only the business of trial and sentence. The Worcester rioters suffered heavily, the leaders being executed.⁶ /

¹ Flying Post 3679 August 2.

² Flying Post 3672 July 16.

³ St. James's Evening Post 24 July 23, 1715.
Townshend to the Earl of Uxbridge July 20, 1715.
S.P. Dorn 35/3

⁴ London Gazette 5350 July 26.

⁵ See Chapter VII Part II on "The Riot Act"

⁶ Flying Post 3697 Sept. 13, 1715.

executed. The more common punishment, however, was whipping or imprisonment for twelve or eighteen months.¹ There was no "Bloody Assize" to punish the rioters of the disaffected region or to create a lasting resentment.

The peculiarity of these attacks of the Summer of 1715 on Meeting Houses lies undoubtedly in their limited place of incidence. Outside Lancashire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Staffordshire there were but three recorded riots. Two were the already mentioned outbreaks at Wrexham and Birmingham; the other took place at Oxford on May 28 and 29 when students and townsfolk pulled down Quaker and Anabaptist Meeting Houses.² These, however, were the only known exceptions. From all other quarters of the country, Addresses of Loyalty came flooding in during the early weeks of August.³

If an attempt is made to discover the reason for the confined area of rioting by examining the motives and nature of the rioters, the following points emerge. The rioters in most cases worked to the accompaniment of the customary Jacobite cries, - "High Church", "An Ormond for Ever",

¹ Assize Books 2/5 Oxford Circuit - Stafford Assizes 1715.

² St. James' Evening Post 55 May 30.

³ See London Gazette August 19, 5352 for a list of Addresses.

"King James III", "No Rump" and "Down with the Roundheads". In Manchester and Stafford the early summer had been marked by a series of Jacobite demonstrations such as proclaiming the Pretender on May 5¹ and June 10². The leader of the Manchester rioters was an ardent and notorious Jacobite, Syddal, who suffered for his political beliefs on the gallows.³ At Stafford, the Rector and one Sneyd, a late Member of Parliament, both High Church Tories, were the instigators of the movement. For months the Rector railed at the Dissenters of the town in his sermons. Defying the order of his Bishop, he had even refused to bury them.⁴ At Newcastle in Staffordshire the leaders of the mob were the church wardens who provided tools and ropes for the work of destruction.⁵ It is clear, too, that in parts the rioters were powerfully protected. At Newcastle the Mayor, Town Clerk and Jury succeeded in baffling and querying evidence of a most positive kind, with the result that all townspeople accused of riot were acquitted at the Sessions Court held on August 10.⁶ Four strangers were found guilty, but no/

¹ Flying Post 3660 June 18.

² Flying Post 3695 Sept. 8th.

³ Memorials of a Dissenting Chapel : Sir Thomas Baker.
pp. 21-22

⁴ Stafford in Olden Times, being a reprint of Articles published in "The Stafford Advertiser" ed. J.L.Cherry.p12

⁵ Flying Post 3684 August 13.

² ibid.

no attempt was made to find them for presentment to the Assizes. At Stafford, despite clear evidence produced against forty seven rioters, only ten were sent for trial to the Assizes.¹

On the other hand, there were signs that some rioters were paid to riot or, as might be expected, were rioting for the fun of it. At Wolverhampton a rioter declared that he and his fellows would be willing "to pull down the Church for the same pay as we have had for that (the destruction of the Meeting House)".² At Wrexham the rioters were at first unable to break into a Meeting House and succeeded only by enlisting the aid of colliers from the nearby pits.³ It may be doubted whether these colliers felt deeply against Dissenters. Again, it appears from a signed confession of guilt⁴ that the rioters at Greenacres, Oldham, were nearly all young boys and girls, some twenty-one in all. Their fathers or guardians agreed to subscribe to a fund organised by the local magistrate, Thomas Horton, for the making good of/

¹ Flying Post 3695 September 8.

² Flying Post 3672 July 16.

³ Flying Post 3676 July 26.

⁴ Confession of Guilt signed on behalf of the rioters at Greenacres. Chetham's Library, Manchester, Bundle 181.

of the damage done to the Meeting House during the riot of June 20.

Summing up, it would seem that there were amongst the rioters some who were mercenaries and others who were merely high-spirited, that there was a general sympathy in this area for the Jacobite cause, that in places the riots were promoted by respectable and powerful Church of England interests, and that feeling against Dissenters ran higher here than anywhere else in England.¹

The Dissenters of England between 1682 and 1710 had been everywhere busy building places of worship. It has been estimated ^{2/}

¹ Of this area, Professor L.B. Namier says "it was the region which, for lack of a better name may be called the "Midland" district, extending from Oxford to Lancaster and comprising the strongholds of the Papist, recreants and the laudians, of the Cavaliers and the Eighth Jacobites" (England in the Age of the American Revolution p.229); and again "The Midland Tories were genuine reactionaries, heirs to the Counter Reformation, to the authoritarian High Church and the Jacobites" (ibid p.230). At the same time it is worthy of note that it was suggested by one contemporary observer that the Staffordshire rioters were suffering economic distress. "These poor fellows have got a notion that the Ministry and Dissenters have ruined trade on purpose to make the nation out of love with the late peace." Journals of the House of Commons XVIII p.227.

² Drysdale A.H. History of the Presbyterians in England p 441.

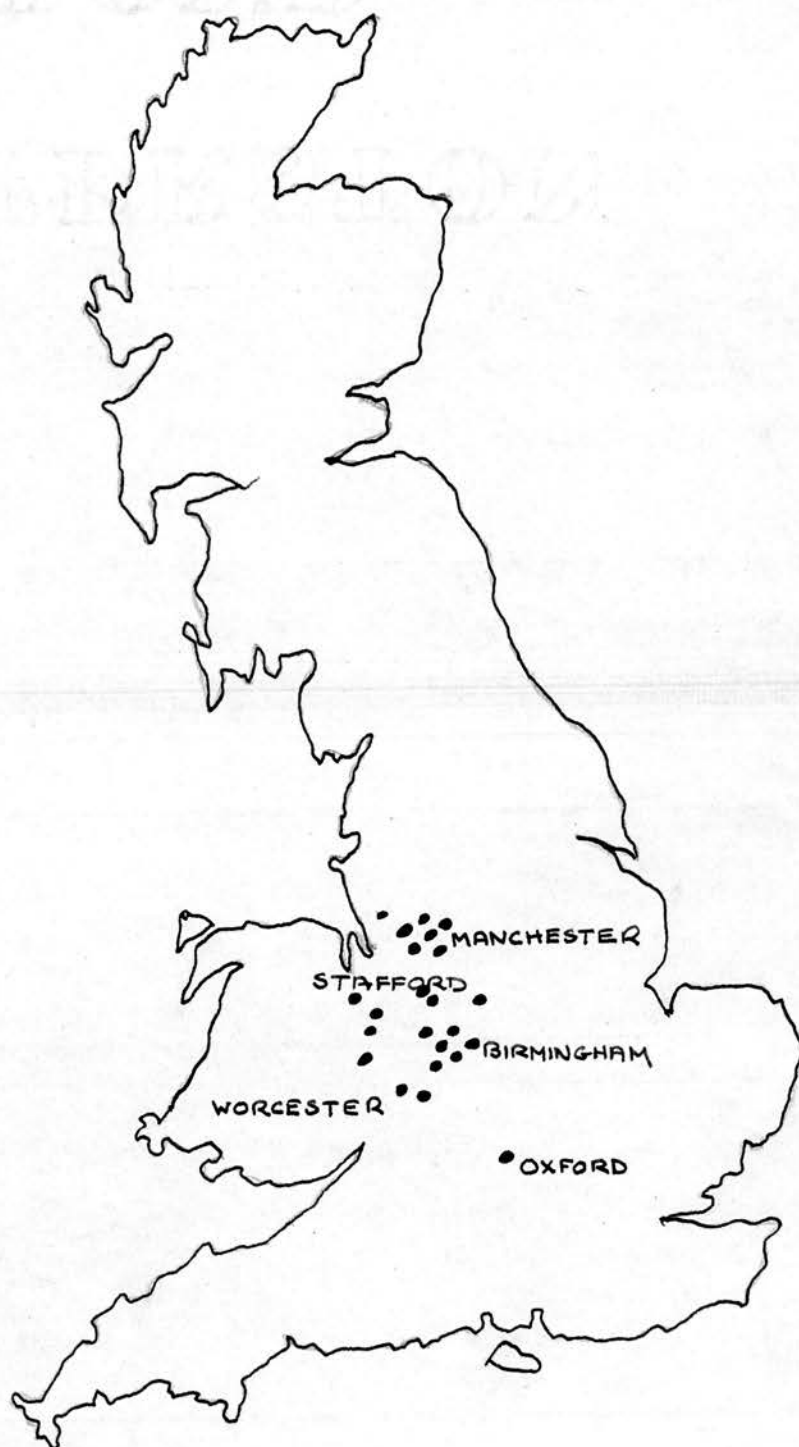
estimated that during this period nearly a thousand meeting houses were erected. The Dissenters were their own architects, builders, joiners and labourers.¹ The results of their labours were thus doubly dear to them - and would presumably add to the vindictive joy of the destroyers. Moreover, while early Dissenters had built Meeting Houses in secluded streets and even outside towns for safety's sake, there had been a tendency - possibly following the Declaration of Indulgence, 1672 - for Dissenters to forget their fears and build openly and in the main streets.² These buildings were obvious targets for destruction by "insular Church of England folk who were convinced that (the Hanoverian) government meant their ruin".³ Yet these new buildings were spread over the entire counties of England. If the list compiled by Daniel Neal⁴, a Congregational minister in the time of Anne, may be believed, Dissenters were particularly strong in Devon (61), Somerset (55), Gloucester (51), Middlesex (91), Essex (52),/

¹ Nightingale B. History of the Old Independent Chapel, Tockholes, p.34.

² Drysdale op.cit. p.444.

³ Feiling K.G. : The Second Tory Party. 1714-1832 p.17.

⁴ Neal's List of Free Churches quoted by Skeats H.S.:
A History of the Free Churches of England 1688-1851
p. 280.



RIOTS AGAINST DISSENTING MEETING HOUSES

JUNE - SEPTEMBER 1715

Essex (52), Kent (52), Yorkshire (48) and Northants (40). Lancashire had 47 churches, while Shropshire and Staffordshire, even allowing for a smaller density of population, had but 15 and 16 respectively. The area of riot was thus but one of several strong Dissenting centres, and this surely emphasises the intensely High Church feeling in the South and east of Lancashire and in Shropshire and Staffordshire, a feeling which was later to find expression in attacks on Methodists at various centres in Staffordshire in 1743¹, and in a notorious reputation for opposition to the Hanoverian Whigs. Following the Jacobite riots at Walsall in June, 1750, the Pelham brothers and Hardwicke wrote to each other agreeing that "Staffordshire was "the worst county in the Kingdom"² and expressing no surprise at the news of the incident for it was typical of "the prevalent spirit there".³ The riots against Meeting Houses serve as an indication of the area where/

¹ John Wesley's Journal V .. p 397. In February 1744 Whitefield's sermons also
V .. p 428. caused large hostile
V .. p 296 demonstrations. S.Cross-land to Sir Thomas Abney February 13, 1744.
S.P. Dorn 36/63 Pelham

² Newcastle Papers B.M. Add.Mss. 33201 ff417. Mr. Petnam to the Duke of Newcastle October 10, 1750.

³ Newcastle Papers B.M. Add Mss. 32721 ff504 Newcastle to Hardwicke, July 4, 1710

also Hardwicke Papers B.M. Add.Mss. 35410 Vol. LXII.

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where feeling for the Established Church was strongest, where the supposed threat of the Hanoverian Accession to that Church was most deeply resented, and where consequent opposition to the Hanoverians and Whigs was most bitter.*

With the end of the riots against meeting houses in early August 1715, London again becomes the centre of disturbances. On October 20, the anniversary of the King's Coronation, several small outbreaks of rioting occurred around the houses of loyal Hanoverians who had illuminated their windows in honour of the day.¹ The following month saw the beginning/

* As a possible explanation of the bitterness in Lancashire, it may be suggested that the religious history of the county during the Civil Wars had left a tradition of hostility, for a strict form of Presbyterian government was established on October 2, 1646 in response to a Petition signed by 12,578 Presbyterians of Lancashire. Nine Presbyteries were set up at Manchester, Bolton (the "Geneva of England"), Blackburn, Warrington, Walton, Croston, Preston, Lancaster and Adlingham. These Presbyteries continued until the Restoration and enforced a strict discipline on the Roman Catholics and Church of England Royalists in the west, south and north of the county. "Favoured by only a section of the community, its discipline was, perhaps unduly pressed on all sorts of parishioners". (Drysdale A.H., History of the Presbyterians in England p. 441).

At the same time, there is no evidence concerning the 1715 riots to support this suggestion.

¹ Flying Post 3768 February 25, 1715.

The Deposition of Elizabeth Jennings. S.P. Dorn^{Dom} 35/4.

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beginning of a series of riots between Hanoverians and Jacobites grouped around their respective mug-houses. On November 3 the Jacobite Bridewell Boys assembled on Ludgate Hill during the celebrations of the Prince of Wales' birthday, broke all the illuminated windows of the district and, howling the usual Jacobite cries, scattered bonfires. The Loyal Society, however, was meeting as usual at the Roe-buck Inn and, having been brought news of the rioting, sallied forth to a resounding victory in a street battle against the Boys (otherwise known as "Birds" or "Jacks").¹ On the following day the Boys and the Loyal Society came to blows over an effigy of William of Orange which the Boys intended burning in Old Jewry.² On November 16 the Loyal Society met to celebrate the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth "and also to have a watchful eye over the riotous Jacobite mob who, we were given to understand, intended to prophane the day by burning several Protestant figures."³ At about 7 p.m. a scout brought news to the Roebuck that the "hellish crews" were/

¹ Flying Post 3720 November 5, 1715.

² *ibid.*

³ St. James' Post 74 November 17, 1715.

were assembled in *Motoms* fashion at St. Martin's le Grand shouting seditious cries. The Society immediately did battle and injured some thirty Jacks in Newgate Street. A second scout brought information concerning the whereabouts of effigies of King George, King William and Marlborough. These figures were removed to the Roebuck. The Jacks, however, rallied to the rescue and, five hundred strong, attacked the inn. The rioters smashed the windows, destroyed the inn sign and, using butchers cleavers, attempted to smash down the doors. Members of the Society attempted to persuade the attackers to disperse. Their advice was ignored and they were forced to fire on the mob, whereby two rioters were killed. Shortly afterwards the Lord Mayor and Constables arrived in Cheapside, and at the news of their arrival the Jacks dispersed hurriedly.¹ December and January were quiet months, but a riot took place on February 6, 1716. This was the anniversary of Queen Anne's Birthday and of King James II's Accession. Four Companies of Trained Bands patrolled the City but could not prevent the Jacks from running/

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St. James' Post 75 November 19, 1715.

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running wild. The Commanding Officer was seized and his silver belted sword of office stolen. The Jacks also attacked the Duke of Newcastle's house in Lincoln's Inn Fields and were fired on before retiring.¹ March 8 was the anniversary of the death of William III and of the Accession of Queen Anne. Both Loyalists and Jacks roamed the streets, but the Loyalists everywhere won the day and eventually patrolled St. Martin's, Aldegate, Newgate, Old Bailey and Ludgate Hill without opposition.² April 23, St. George's Day, was also the anniversary of Queen Anne's Coronation. The Jacks organised a demonstration and sent messengers around Smithfield, Old Bailey, Ludgate Hill and Fleet Street to summon followers. The Loyalists at once paraded the district between the Roebuck and the Magpie (another Loyalist mug-house). Skirmishes took place at Woodstreet End and Giltspur End. On May 29 - the principal Jacobite date - large numbers of Jacks threatened to pull down the Roebuck and St. James' Mug-house. The Jacks, among whom were many Charity School boys, were also active in Smithfield and Holborn, but were dispersed by Captain Hilliard of/

¹ The News Letter Part VI Saturday February 11, 1716.

² Flying Post 3774 March 10, 1716

of the County Militia. On July 20 the Jacks attacked Read's Mug-house in Salisbury Court off Fleet Street. This attack failed, but on July 23, after attacking another Loyalist centre at the Blue Boar's Head near Water Lane, a second attack was made on Read's. The rioters smashed their way into the cellars. One Overs, a Constable of the Cheapside Ward stood by and made no attempt to check the rioters.¹ Read and his friends were eventually forced to fire on the mob, thus killing a rioter named Daniel Vaughan (whose funeral on July 25 was attended by a great crowd²). The mob dispersed with the mug-house sign and carried it in triumph around Fleet Street. Five of the rioters were apprehended and eventually executed at the end of Salisbury Court in September.³ The attack on Read's marks the end of the mug-house riots. The Loyal Societies met in their various houses during the winter of 1716, celebrated the appropriate days and patrolled the streets without opposition. At the same time, the trustees of the Charity Schools decided to remove the Jacobite schoolmasters who had been responsible for influencing the children and/

¹ Weekly Journal August 4, 1716.

² Weekly Journal August 4, 1716.

³ Weekly Journal September 22, 1716.

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and inducing them to take part in riots; Thomas Best of St. Anne's, Aldersgate - who had recently christened a baby son James Stuart - and Thomas Wild of St. Anne's, Westminster were singled out as chief offenders.¹

The country in general was very free of riots from August 1715 to 1716. At Leeds the Pretender's Birthday had been celebrated with enthusiasm on June 10, 1715 but though London newspapers noted with disapproval that only twenty townspeople joined the Earl of Burlington's Army on the way to Preston they were unable to seize on any positive acts of disloyalty there.² Bristol was heavily policed by two regiments and gave no trouble.³ Demonstrations were confined to the University towns. The riot at Oxford on October 30, 1716 (the Prince of Wales' Birthday) is elsewhere described.⁴ Oxford had, of course, a considerable reputation for riots. Early in 1715 the mob there had nearly murdered a King's Messenger who attempted to apprehend two notorious Jacobites⁵, and recruiting sergeants were always accorded a/

¹ Weekly Journal October 13, 1716.

² Flying Post 3749 Jan 12-14, 1716.

³ Weekly Journal February 4, 1716.

⁴ See Chapter on Anti-Military Rioting.

⁵ Nathan Willcocks, Messenger to Townshend S.P. Dorn 35/2
undated (1715)

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a hot reception by town and gown. The sentiments of the Oxford Jacobites live on in the well-known pages of Hea^rne; they are aptly summarised by the unknown "Philopoliteus" in a letter to Townshend "I find they (the people of Oxford) are generally debauched with Jacobitism and call the Parliament the Rump and every other night have a parcel of rioters going along streets crying out "Down with the Rump", "Down with the Roundheads", "An Ormond forever" and other expressions not fit to say. It is no shame to be called a Jacobite. The Pretender's legitimacy is publicly asserted and proved by the opinion of our late dear Queen who (so they say) owned him for her brother. I am not able to suppress the folly and madness of the youth and (as I am well informed) of the Heads and Fellows of this University who, with the country clergy of their kidney, have abused the population and gentry, too, that I believe they are disposed to any extravagances. 'Tis true, they are not all so disposed, for besides many thousands that are neutral and wait upon the issue of things, there are many professed friends of King George and many more that would own themselves were they protected.¹

Cambridge/

¹ Philopoliteus to Townshend. July 26, 1715. S.P. ^{Dorn} 35/2.

Cambridge had no such reputation. In 1715 Vice Chancellor Sherlock * made strenuous efforts to preserve the reputation of his University by treating the slightest frivolity of a Jacobite nature with severity.¹ On May 29, 1716, however, the Jacobites of Cambridge roamed the streets in great numbers wearing the green and shouting Jacobite cries. The rioters attacked Clare Hall and Bennett College (both by repute outstandingly loyal to the Hanoverian cause) and broke the windows of Dissenters.

After 1716 Jacobite riots became rare and of small size.

Lord/

* The Dictionary of National Biography remarks of Sherlock that "He was supposed to have connived at Jacobitism in Cambridge but was probably no more than a 'Hanoverian Toy'". In defence of Sherlock may be quoted his letter to Townshend (a school friend at Eton) of June 16, 1715 - "it has and shall be my care to promote the peace and interest of his Majesty's Government to the utmost of my power" and "I should not have thought this matter weighty enough to trouble your Lordship with, but that I am more than ordinarily concerned that the University should not suffer in your Lordship's opinion, who has lately been so kind and generous a friend". S.P. Dorn 35/3.

A more balanced view of Sherlock is presented by E. Carpenter in his article on Thomas Sherlock 1678-1761 (S.P.C. 1936) p.11.

¹ See the Correspondence between Sherlock and Townshend June, 1715. S.P. Dorn 35/3.
Dorn.

Lord Lieutenant Lisburne of Cardigan claimed in 1717 that it was unsafe for him to venture into his own county, where two gentlemen of good estate, Lewis Pryce of Gogarthen and William Price of Nantcoos, were organising the county folk in a terrorist campaign against Hanoverians.¹ At Brecon in 1718 a riot broke out between the Jacobite and Hanoverian parties of the town; the house of a loyal and eminent Hanoverian, James Jones, was destroyed.² In Staffordshire and Shropshire Jacobite days were celebrated each year³ by the wearing of green ribbons and oak leaves and the hanging of effigies of George I, William III or Marlborough. These activities resulted in the riot at Walsall in 1750.⁴

Despite these outbreaks, it may safely be stated that Jacobite riots after 1716 were few and constituted no danger to the Hanoverians; they are interesting chiefly as an indication of the lingering sentimental sympathy for the Jacobite cause in a few formerly strong Jacobite centres.

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- 1 Lord Lisburne to Paul Methven, February 4, 1717.
S.P. Dorn 35/8.
 - 2 James Jones to the Post-Master General, July 11, 1718.
S.P. Dorn.
 - 3 Report of N. Carrington, King's Messenger, June 16,
S.P. Dorn. 36/113. Major Chaban to W. Sharpe, June 23,
1750. S.P. Dorn, 36/113. Report J.A. Hamilton from
Bridgewater, S.P. Dorn, 35/27 June 12, 1721.
 - 4 See Chapter on Anti-Military Riots.

This is not to say that there were not many allegations of Jacobitism between 1716 and 1754. These allegations have, however, to be treated with the greatest circumspection, for many incidents and people were branded as "Jacobite" by persons who hoped to gain the ear of the Government for the advancement of their own private ends. Sir William Lowther of Pontefract repeatedly warned Sunderland in 1717 that the towns of the West Riding were Jacobite strongholds.¹ At the same time, the Corporation of Pontefract complained of Lowther's practices during elections², and Lowther was finally ignored by the Government and treated as a scare-monger.³ Similarly, S. Legge, a citizen of Norwich, wrote at length to Townshend in 1722 describing the Jacobite tendencies of several Norwich citizens.⁴ It is surely more than a coincidence that the supposed Jacobites were opposing Legge's efforts in the election of a Sheriff. Again, the Mayor of Harwich, Samuel Lucas, reported a Jacobite riot to/

¹ Sir W. Lowther to Sunderland on September 16, 1717 and several later occasions. S.P. Dorn. 35/9.

² Corporation of Pontefract to Sunderland 1717. S.P. Dorn. 35/9.

³ Sir W. Lowther to J. Craggs, 1719. S.P. Dorn. 35/17.

⁴ S. Legge to Townshend, August 30, 1722. S.P. Dorn. 35/22.

to Townshend in 1724.¹ The inciters and leaders of the mob were, according to Lucas, magistrates and members of the Corporation. The Government investigator, William Leathy, came to the conclusion after examining the affair, that the whole matter was trifling and that Lucas was, if anything, to blame in that he had aggravated his enemies.² The Bishop of Lincoln was sure that the riots at Lincoln in 1726 were due not at all to the proposed removal of the Cathedral Spires but to a "deep-seated plan to disquiet the government and to show their disaffection to it". The riots were the work of Jacobites of the county.³ In the same way Colonel Powlett at Frome in 1726 condemned the rioting weavers as Jacobites to the government investigator, Giles Earle, though Earle himself noticed how loyal the weavers were to King George.⁴ There was, in fact, a general tendency on the part of many officers to ascribe seditious feelings to undemonstrative civilians.⁵ The magistrates of Newcastle in 1750 denounced the keelmen as Jacobites.⁶ This was rubbish; the keelmen had/

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- ¹ S. Lucas to Townshend, August 4, 1724. S.P. Dorn^{Dom} 35/51.
 - ² W. Leathy to Townshend, September 8, 1724, S.P. Dorn^{Dom} 35/52
 - ³ Bishop of Lincoln to Newcastle, November 1, 1726. S.P. Dorn^{Dom} 35/63.
 - ⁴ G. Earle to Newcastle, December 28, 1726.
 - ⁵ See Chapter on Anti-Military Riots.
 - ⁶ Mayor of Newcastle to Bedford, April 28, 1750. S.P. Dorn^{Dom} 36/112.

had strong material reasons for rioting and the magistrates were deliberately obscuring the economic questions at issue by magnifying out of all true importance one trifling incident in which very few keelmen were involved. The charge of Jacobitism had become an all-too-common smear; made often without reason it should in every case be regarded with the greatest suspicion after 1716. It would not do to think of Jacobite riots as evidence of active support for the Jacobite cause, or to interpret the utterance of the usual cries as concealing a desire to act with determination against the Hanoverians and possibly to suffer for the Pretender. The "Paris Gazette" certainly made much of the events of the summer of 1715¹ and ^{these} mere disturbances may indeed have counted for much with the Pretender. Yet it is significant that, during the 1715 and 1745 Rebellions, the reputedly Jacobite areas did not rise in welcome.

Many, indeed, of the Jacobite rioters were merely young men and girls enjoying the excitement of a scuffle. It has been seen that at Greenacres in Lancashire the rioters were/

¹ See, for example, reports in the "Flying Post" 2664.

were so young that their parents agreed to pay compensation for the damage inflicted by their children on the Meeting House. A lad of twelve was reputed to be the leader of a small riot at Taunton in October 1714.¹ Again, of the five rioters executed for the riot at Read's Mug-house in Salisbury Court, July 1716, only one had the slightest Jacobite connection, being the servant of the Jacobites captured at Preston. The remaining four - the oldest of whom was twenty-one - suffered for their curiosity. From the account of the Ordinary of Newgate they emerge as uneducated and thoughtless apprentices. Of William Price, for example, the Ordinary remarked that "hearing there was a great concourse of people in Salisbury Court he presently ran thither ... it was with no ill intent but out of sheer curiosity, however, when he was come he joined with others there and assisted them in demolishing Mr. Read's Mug-house destroying his goods and crying High Church and Ormond".² It has also been noticed that Charity School children were used as rioters for the Jacobite cause. Thus the very youthfulness of the rioters/

¹ London in Jacobite Times: Doran p. 24.

² The Ordinary of Newgate's Account. London Guildhall Library, Broad-sides 12-125.

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rioters makes one regard many of these riots with a certain tolerance and scepticism.

In general it may be remarked that no riots occupied such space in the contemporary press - which on the Whig side had an interest in the magnifying and the distorting of the smallest incidents - yet no riots were put down with such ease or constituted such a small threat to the stability of the Hanoverian Government. There was one occasion only when a serious attack might have developed on the central government and that was on May 29, 1715 in London. This - the ^{council} ~~council~~ date of Jacobite rioting -, was a failure because the Secretaries of State and the authorities of London and Westminster knew of the danger and took adequate precautions. The reason for the ineffectiveness of the Jacobite rioters lies probably in the fact that they were Jacobites in name only. In reality they were, in part, the touchy defenders of the privileges of the Church of England against Dissenters whose strength was becoming increasingly obvious from the widespread building of Meeting Houses. In the main, however, the Jacobites were sentimentalists. Their imaginations could not as yet brook the uncongenial personalities of George I and II. Their minds rankled at the sight of Hanoverian soldiers who were unpopular as a burden on the locality/

locality and as symbols of the Hanoverians. And to this sentimentality was added a great wealth of high spirits, exemplified in the seizing of the opportunity to break the monotony of everyday life by gleeful and usually harmless mobbing. Rioting of a serious nature is not the product of sentiment and high spirits; it rises from a deeper well-spring of economic discontent. The lack of such a source explains the ephemeral and meaningless nature of Jacobite disturbances. The Jacobites were, in very truth, "the barrenest of all mortals".

IX ANTI-MILITARY RIOTS

Unhappy relations between the civil population and the army were often the cause of rioting between 1715 and 1754. The Seventeenth Century fear of a standing army still existed, and the passing of a Mutiny Bill was often the signal for much parliamentary abuse of the army and martial law. Members of the House of Commons waxed eloquent over the valour of the untrained Briton and even Sir William Yonge, Secretary-at-War in 1735, could ~~three~~ years earlier make the ridiculous statement that "we have men enough to defend themselves against any invasion whatever, though there were not so much as one red-coat in the whole kingdom."¹ In consequence, the Hanoverian government had to make do with a force which was, in cases of actual danger, inadequate. Occasionally, as after the Bristol riots of 1749, the value of a standing army as a police force would be made apparent, and some forthright correspondent would praise the military in the local newspaper;² but this was very much against the prevailing national/

¹ Parliamentary History. 1732 quoted in Fortescue History of the British Army Vol. II p. 17.

² Bristol Oracle, Vol. III, August 5, 1749.

national prejudice.

The character of the soldier at the time did not help to lessen his unpopularity. He was, generally speaking, drawn from the dregs of the population, badly paid, punished with incredible severity and regarded with universal scorn. "The most honest man in England had but to don the red-coat to be dubbed a lewd profligate and wretch. Small wonder that, clothed with such a character, ready made and unalterable, soldiers should have made no scruple of living their life in accordance with it."¹ Unfortunately, too, soldiers in the greater part of England had not even the grim shelter of barracks, for the only barracks were at the Tower, at the Savoy, and at Hull. According to Pulteney, by scattering soldiers in billets around the countryside, the civil population would continue to remember the evils of a standing army.² Even when military help had been requested of the government by a magistrate, soldiers were received in a grudging spirit and got rid of as quickly as possible when rioting had ceased.³ Again, the soldier was a living symbol of the dull German

Hanoverians/

¹ Fortescue, op. cit. Book VII, p. 32.

² Clode, C.M. Military Forces of the Crown. I. 398.

³ See Chapter VII Part II on the Secretary of State.

Hanoverians in a country which, sentimentally, was still attached to the romantic Stuarts. It is small wonder that officers, especially, acquired the over-sensitivity of an inferiority complex and regarded the celebration of Hanoverian and Jacobite days with such desperate seriousness.

It is, even while remembering the unpleasant type of soldier recruited at this time, impossible not to feel a great deal of pity for the rank and file quartered almost as an army of occupation in enemy territory; despised, reviled and unwanted by the local inhabitants. The plight of the soldier was well described by an officer at Henley in 1743 to the Colonel of his Regiment.¹ A bargee at Henley had picked a quarrel with a corporal as a small band of soldiers was beating up at the Fair, and in the scuffle the bargee broke his leg. This so infuriated his fellow bargees that, together with the butchers and smiths of the town, they fell upon three corporals who were unlucky enough to be in the streets and beat them savagely. The mob then attacked the guard room itself, but fortunately did not succeed in forcing an entry. A relieving party marched into the town to the accompaniment of booing and the customary cry of "Long/

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Lieut.-Col. Fitzwilliam to Col. Fleming, 4 June, 1743.
S.P. Dom 36/61.

"Long Live the Pretender", and the officer-in-charge applied to the Mayor of Henley for help in taking up rioters. The Mayor laid the blame for the whole affair on the bargees who were without his jurisdiction, but was eventually persuaded to issue a warrant for the arrest of a townsman known to have taken part in the rioting. This, as Lieutenant-Colonel Fitzwilliam remarked in his letter, would prove of little avail for, even if the man were found, his fellow townsmen would outswear the soldiers. More telling, however, than Fitzwilliam's account of the riots, are his remarks concerning the soldier's plight. "A poor soldier is punished with the utmost severity by the civil and military law if he offends either. When on the other hand we cannot get either law or justice after meeting with the most flagrant inhuman treatment. The magistrates are not well inclined to us, but were they ever so willing to do us justice, the mob have got such a hand that they dare not execute the laws.... I know very well that the Government ought to stand by us in many cases, but I think it best never to appeal to such high powers but in the case of utmost necessity; it is putting them to a dilemma whenever complaints of this kind are made them ... What would be our fates had we the misfortune of killing any of these people even in our own defence? They will not quarter enough/

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enough of us in one town, for were we more together we might with sticks and other weapons turn out against a mob and get the better of them; whereas our small number with firearms, which they know we dare not use, only makes us appear more despicable, and more liable to have our brains beat out. Very lately, Lieutenant Arkland was walking in the meadows where he met three townsmen, who upon perceiving him to be an officer, came to a sudden resolution to throw him into the river because he was an officer."

This seems a fair and obviously sincere account of the plight of soldiers quartered around the country. In this particular instance the Colonel of the Regiment took the matter up with the government, and the Mayor of Henley received a stiff note ¹ five days after the riots from the Secretary of the Lords Justices ordering him to investigate the matter fully, and informing him that two additional companies of soldiers would be quartered in the town. To this the Mayor, nothing loth, replied ² that the whole matter was greatly exaggerated and had in reality been the quarrel of a few people inflamed with drink; furthermore, that/

¹ Lords Justices to Mayor of Henley, June 9, 1743. S.P. Dom 36/61.

² Mayor of Henley to Lords Justices. S.P. Dom 36/61.

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that the quartering of soldiers at Henley ought to cease as the innkeepers were already in great distress. And with this sally the matter seems to have ended.

Another instance of the ingrained prejudice of the people against soldiers appears from a petition¹ for reprieve brought by a common soldier, David Reid, against sentence of death passed against him by the Mayor of Bristol. According to Reid, the people of Bristol bore "so great a hatred and inveteracy against your Majesty's soldiers that if they behave themselves ever so well, yet they will find means to persecute and oppress them." On the intercession of Lord Scarborough, this petition was granted. The reprieve immediately roused the Bristol mob to action, and the editor Fairley wrote bitterly in his newspaper against the government and expressed the common low opinion of soldiers. It is not to be wondered at that desertion was common, or that such recruits as there were came from the very scum of the populace.

The presence of recruiting sergeants sometimes provided opportunities for mob activity, especially during the first years of George I's reign in regions where the popular appeal of the Stuarts remained strong. At Oxford, for example, there was trouble/

¹ Petition of D. Reid. September 6, 1738. S.P. Dom 36/46.

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trouble in late August, 1715, when officers of Lord Orrery's and Colonel Pococke's Regiments arrived in the city on a recruiting campaign. Their very appearance in the streets was the signal for Jacobite cries, and the sergeant who attempted to read the recruiting proclamation was covered with mud and filth each time he repeated the words "All gentlemen that have a mind to serve his majesty King George." According to the Jacobite Hearne, whose joyous account¹ is fully borne^{out} by a letter² written by an officer passing through Oxford at the time, town and gown united to humiliate the officers and to rescue a citizen committed to jail for damning King George when approached by the recruiting sergeant as a likely fellow. The government saw fit to quarter five hundred soldiers at Oxford shortly after these riots, and to leave them there for nine months while the Jacobite Rising of 1715 took place. Thus could a saddened but unrepentant Hearne walk out to Bullingdon Green in the summer of 1716 to view the soldiers' tents and make bitter reflections on the tyranny of the "Duke of Brunswick".

Rioting between civilians and soldiers was not, however, simply due to the national dislike of the army. The greater part of/

¹ Hearne's Collection, August 18, 22, 31, November 30, 1715.
June 29, 1716.

² Unsigned letter of an officer to Mr Mason of Wellingborough.
S.P. Dom 35/4.

of the riots that were serious enough to worry the government may be ascribed to an excess of zeal and enthusiasm for the Hanoverians on the part of army officers. This was particularly true in regions such as Oxford, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Derbyshire which had a reputation for Jacobitism. Here officers seemed often to go out of their way to create trouble with the local authorities on the grounds that enthusiasm in the area for George I and George II was not sufficiently demonstrative. Loyalty of feeling was proved at this time by the lighting of bonfires, the illuminating of windows, the firing of guns, the ringing of bells and the creation of a general hullabaloo on certain days of the year. A loyal Hanoverian was expected to celebrate King George's birthday on May 28th, his accession on August 1st, his Coronation on October 20th, and the birthday of the Prince of Wales on October 30th. A Jacobite could with safety celebrate the date of the 1660 Restoration, May 29th, and, at his own risk, the birthday of the Pretender on June 10th. The observance of these days undoubtedly meant a great deal to zealots of both sides, and officers in the army took this matter very seriously.

When loyalty was expected to prove itself in such a definite manner, it is not surprising that quarrelling and riots should result/

result. A typical instance occurred at Ashbourne, Derbyshire on August 1st, 1716 when the Mayor, Brooke Boothby, felt himself so insulted and persecuted by the officer in charge of the soldiers quartered in his town that he wrote to the Duke of Devonshire, Lord President of the Council, who ordered the matter to be investigated. The officer, a Major Roberts, explained that May 29th had been celebrated at Ashbourne with quite immoderate rejoicings and all possible disrespect to George I.¹ The accession of George I on August 1st had been unnoticed by the townspeople until he had ordered his soldiers to go round the town telling people to put candles in their windows. Mobbing recurred after this, but no complaint against his soldiers' conduct had been made to him personally. The Mayor, on the other hand, pointed out that May 28th had been celebrated very largely as a result of threats from Roberts that he would have every unlit window in the town broken. Most of the townspeople were ignorant of the significance of the day, but had listened to the Mayor's advice, communicated through the Town Crier, and had put candles in their windows. The following day, May 29th had/

¹ Major Roberts to the Duke of Devonshire, undated. S.P. Dom 35/6.

had been celebrated in accordance with Act of Parliament, in a seemly fashion and with no disrespect shown to George I. As for August 1st, the officers had refused to listen to his explanation that there could be no ringing of bells as the tower was unsafe; there had been no ringing of bells in all the Mayor's recollection. Despite this, the church warden had been forced into ringing the bells. Furthermore, it was untrue that the Town was not going to celebrate the day. The Constable had seen to it that four hundred weights of coal were carted to the Market Square in readiness for a bonfire which was to be lit at 9 p.m. The soldiers, however, had not given the celebrations time to get under way, and had wandered around the town breaking windows indiscriminately. 1

The trouble did not end here, for on October 20th, Coronation Day, Robert's soldiers lit a bonfire outside Boothby's house and deliberately created a quarrel with the townsfolk, while Roberts himself dared Boothby to complain again to the government. Boothby retorted with violent words, and the soldiers promptly fell on the townsfolk and beat them.

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Mayor of Ashbourne to Duke of Devonshire. S.P. Dom 35/6.

The famous riot at Oxford on October 30th, 1716, - the Prince of Wales' Birthday - was the result of a very similar chain¹ of events. May 28th was poorly celebrated by town and gown, whereas on the day following there were great expressions of joy. On October 30th an officer approached the Mayor and asked him to see to it that the civilian population celebrated the day suitably. Nothing was done, however, by city or^r university. Trouble began when soldiers lit a bonfire and stood round it drinking the Prince's health. A city mob attacked them and broke the windows of the Star Inn where the officers were holding a banquet. By way of retaliation the soldiers were ordered to go round the streets to break windows where there were no lights. This was done with gusto and to an accompaniment of musket shots until the officer in charge ordered his men back to quarters. The affair caused a stir in Parliament and, while the University and City were severely censured for this failure to celebrate the day,² a minority in the House of Lords argued forcefully against the/

¹ The Weekly Journal, June 9, 1716.

² Boothby, Mayor of Ashbourne, to Devonshire. S.P. Dom 55/6.

² Hearne: Collection, November 1, 1716.

the military. It was thought that parliamentary censure would encourage soldiers everywhere to despise the power of the magistrates and to consider themselves as outside the civil power in criminal cases.¹ In their practice of enforcing celebration officers were indeed assuming peculiar and unlawful powers and encroached upon the domain of the magistrate. An officer at Bridgewater in 1721 saw fit to order the Mayor of the town to make proclamation that there would be no wearing of white roses on the Pretender's Birthday (June 10th) as had hitherto been the custom.² The Mayor agreed, but promptly disappeared together with his Bellman and Cryer. On the 10th the population rose and attacked the soldiers with cleavers; the soldiers retaliated and much damage was caused to buildings. Thus a fairly harmless and sentimental occasion became one of bitterness and strife through the well-meaning but tactless and unwarranted interference of an officer.

A similar clash between townsfolk and military occurred at Walsall in 1753 where, on May 29th, a gibbet was erected at Hill Top/

¹ Dissentient Protest of 32 Lords of the Committee, April 3 1717.
Cobbett's Parliamentary History.

Top with an effigy of George II. This was the focal point for the celebrations of a mob of some three hundred, who danced around, shot at, and eventually burnt the effigy.¹ Rumours of the affair reached Major Chaban, officer in charge of a regiment at Shrewsbury. Two days later Chaban sent a Captain to Walsall to enquire into the riot. The Mayor and Town Clerk proved most uncooperative, protesting that the whole thing was caused by a mere handful of drunken fellows who meant no real harm, and that they themselves knew nothing of it, since they had been away from Walsall on the day.² Chaban therefore reported the matter to the government and an investigator Nathaniel Carrington was sent to Walsall early in June where he, together with two Birmingham magistrates, attempted to take Informations from the inhabitants.³ The latter resented the enquiries and threatened to rise on several occasions when prisoners were taken up. A company of dragoons arrived in time to prevent any further rioting at Walsall itself, but at Shrewsbury trouble had been caused/

¹ Brief of Evidence against the rioters at Walsall. S.P. Dom 36/113.

² Captain Hambleton's Report. S.P. Dom 36/113.

³ N. Carrington's Report to J. Sharpe. June 16th, 1750.
S.P. Dom 36/113.

caused by Chaban's decision to put an end to all Jacobite celebrations such as the carrying of white roses around the town. He posted soldiers round the streets, but everything was quiet until a party of soldiers took exception to a song being sung in a tavern. This started a riot which ended in the dragoons drawing their swords and dealing round them in earnest at a mob which eventually barricaded itself in an inn and continued the struggle with brick-bats and tiles.¹ The dragoons were eventually withdrawn.

Thus it may be seen that, while the soldier was often badly treated by the civilian population, the rioting in which he was involved was due largely to the lack of humour on the part of his officers - in Pulteney's words, "giddy, insolent, officers" - who fancied they showed zeal for the government by abusing those whom they considered to be of the opposition.² Especially is the lack of humour evident in the way in which soldiers conducted themselves in a scuffle. Civilians were content to break each other's heads and shake hands the following day; soldiers hit to hurt and with a professional malice of purpose.³

¹ Major Chaban to W. Sharpe. June 23, 1750. S.P. Dom 36/113.

² Fortescue, op. cit. Book VII, p. 25.

³ W. Chetwynde to Duke of Newcastle, April 13, 1734. S.P. Dom 36/29.

X. A COLLECTION of SMALLER RIOTS.

There are, during the period under study, numerous examples of smaller riots. These examples, though apparently unconnected, often reveal an interesting and peculiar cause of disturbance and, in that they present a picture of one aspect of early Eighteenth Century Society, have thus something in common. They are therefore collected in the present chapter.

Representatives or living symbols of authority or government were frequent causes of mob risings. Jailers were on occasion naturally unpopular. In 1718 Harrison, a notorious ^{defamer} ~~defender~~ of the government, was brought by jailers to the pillory at Aldgate. A large mob led by an old woman, Catherine Priest, rushed at the jailers who were forced to retreat with the prisoner unpunished.¹ At Stitstead, Essex, in 1727 a woman of Lord Maynard's parish gave birth to her third illegitimate child and was, at the especial request of Lord Maynard and the Parish Vestry, placed in the village House of Correction. Here she fell into a decline and the keeper of the House, George Downing, /

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Examination of John Lee, Sergeant of Woodstreet Compter and Charles Nelson, Yeoman of the Poultry Compter in the City of London. August 6th, 1738. S.P. Dorm 35/12. As no constables appeared at the pillory to control the mob, the government ordered the Sheriffs of the City to see to it that Undersheriffs should attend all executions in person, holding themselves prepared to read the Proclamation from the Riot Act. (Order on the reverse of the above document).

Downing, applied for her discharge to three magistrates. Lord Maynard, however, opposed the application vigorously with the result that the woman remained in confinement and died two months later. The Vic^a of Halstead, took up a prolonged campaign against Downing and insisted on a Coroner's Inquest, despite the statements of natural death made by the Stitstead surgeon. The Coroner's Inquest acquitted Downing, but a riot broke out at the woman's funeral and the mob raged for some time around Downing's house. A magistrate friend of the Vic^a of Halstead then ordered Downing to be apprehended and removed to Halstead Jail. Fortunately, Downing had a stout friend in his own Vicar (also a magistrate) who set off for Halstead to bail out his unfortunate parishioner. In the outskirts of Halstead, however, he found himself surrounded by a mob which had been brought together by the ringing of Church bells, and was forced to read the Proclamation before the crowd allowed him to pass through. He succeeded in liberating Downing, but for weeks the jailer was the object of mob attacks in Stitstead and the villages around, and notices were posted in public places inviting all people, especially former inmates of the House of Correction, to join in the above.

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The Case of George Downing. April 17th, 1728. S.P. Dorm 36/6

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The unpopularity of bailiffs and assistants was also an occasional stimulus to riot. John Gartside, an assistant bailiff for Stepney and Hackney was in 1724 siezed by a mob near Wapping Dock. For an hour he was exhibited as "a rogue and villian" at a public house and thereafter was dipped many times in a deep hole "filled with ordure and such like nastiness". Finally he was forced to drink a quart of gin and instructed¹ never to come near the district again. In 1726 a bailiff attempted to arrest a woman for debt in the Tower Division but was resisted by a mob which quickly rose up to ^{rescue} ~~rescue~~ the woman. The bailiff sent for the constable of the ward who endeavoured in vain to quell the crowd. A passing press-gang joined the mob, attacked the bailiff and constable with drawn swords, severely injured them, and enabled the woman to make her escape.²

Since 1541 the Company of Barbers and Surgeons of London had had the right and privilege of collecting from the gallows the remains of four felons each year for the purpose of instruction and experience in the science of surgery. This practice had begun to arouse the hostility of mobs in 1710, and the/

¹ Statement of the Governor of the Tower to Townshnd. May 9th, 1926. S.P. Dorm 35/62.

the Company's Beadles found their task of removing bodies from the place of execution increasingly difficult. The Company therefore in 1715 petitioned the King for a strong military guard to act as escort to their Beadles, at the same time pointing out that the Company was the Examining Board for prospective Surgeons and mates in the Navy and also for superannuation purposes, and that these duties were performed without fee.¹ Despite this petition the Beadles continued to be the cause of angry demonstrations, and in 1719 the Company petitioned the King a second time.² In 1739, too, a riot broke out at Tyburn when a mob attempted to prevent the removal of bodies to the Surgeons' Hall.³

The activities of the press-gang were also the cause of riots, as at Norwich in 1743 when a bosun's mate took a party ashore from the "Victory" and impressed a waterman, John Angus. Angus forcibly resisted the press gang and by his cries for help attracted a considerable band of friends who beat the sailors so vigorously that the bosun's mate drew his pistol and killed Angus. The bosun's mate was actually condemned to death for this/

¹ Petition of the Masters and Governors and Assistants Livery and Freemen of the Company of Barbers and Surgeons of London. Undated (1715) S.P. Dorn 35/2.

² Petition of the Company of Barbers and Surgeons. Undated (1719) S.P. Dorn 35/19.

³ Caledonian Mercury 2960 March 20, 1739. Scenes of Hooliganism were frequent at executions and public punishments. In 1723 a mob at Charing Cross heaped so much mud and filth on an unfortunate person Middleton as he stood in the pillory that he was suffocated. No peace officers were present to preserve the peace.

this murder, but local opinion was not entirely against him and a petition on his behalf was sent to the King by the Mayor-elect¹ three magistrates, the sheriff and several aldermen. In June 1719 the Lieutenant of the "Suffolk" impressed a waterman near Mill Bank but was immediately surrounded by a hostile mob of² watermen who rescued their fellow.

The prevalence and popularity of smuggling led to frequent riots against government officers. In the Borders in 1715 preventing officers had an exceptionally difficult time attempting to curb the smuggling of salt from Scotland. Many officers were beaten and severely injured by ^{smugglers} small riots and their friends - and if, on firing in self defence, they were unlucky enough to kill rioters, they were in sore danger of being tried by a local³ jury. Customs Officials had a grievous time when ships were driven on shore or guided to destruction by wreckers. In 1721 the Collector of Customs at Penzance reported the wreck of a Dutch ship carrying wine and brandy at Mullion. A mob had seized the ship's cargo despite the attempts of the Sheriff of Cornwall and the customs officers to keep them away.⁴ In 1732 the/

¹ Petition of the Mayor-elect. of Norwick etc. 1743 S.P.D. 36/52.

² The Weekly Journal, June 6, 1719.

³ B. Meldmay, T. Woodcock, J. Cordonell, C. Dent and J.L. Danvers to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury enclosing the affidavit of George Graham, July 5, 1715. S.P. Dorm 35/3.

⁴ E. Prizdeaux to an unknown correspondent. February 17, 1732. S.P. Dorm 36/29.

the tinnars of St. Agnes watched a vessel hovering off the coast in such a position that it was doomed if the wind changed from the west to the north. After five days this in fact happened, and the local magistrates were convinced that the master of the ship had acted in league with the tinnars, for he had on several occasions been warned of the dangers of remaining in his present station, and pilots had offered to take his ship for a small fee of two or three guineas to St. Ives or to a port in Wales. As soon as the ship was driven aground, the tinnars rushed forward in a body to sieze the cargo. The Padstow magistrate Prideaux warned the mob afterwards of the seriousness of their action and expressed the hope that he would live to see "wreckers hang in chains upon the cliffs".¹ In 1735 the "Norwich Artillery" was driven ashore four miles from Aberystwyth. The Collector of Customs at Aberdovey at once sent a Corporal and ten men to defend the wreck, but this party was driven away by a mob of eight hundred country folk who rifled the ship's cargo and carried away most of its goods the same day. The magistrates² and Collector were helpless and could do nothing.

Local/

¹ E. Prisdcaux to an unknown correspondent. February 17, 1732. S.P. Dorm 36/29.

² Customs Officer at Aberdovey to the Commissioners at London. February 9, 1735. S.P. Dorm 36/38.

Local elections were frequent occasions for riot. In January 1715 a Royal Proclamation warned all Sheriffs and Justices of the Peace to take precautions that no tumults should break out at the ensuing parliamentary elections, it having come to the notice of the Government that "evil-minded persons" were already at work stirring up mobs.¹ At the end of January "The Flying Post", a violently pro-Government paper, published an imaginary Bill of Costs for a "late Tory election in the West".² Fictitious though the Bill obviously is, and a caricature of reality it does nevertheless depict practices which were believed to exist. The Bill reads as follows:-

Imprimis	For bespeaking and collecting a Mob	£20.	0.	0.
Hem	For many suits of Knots for their heads.	£30.	0.	0.
	For scores of huzza-men.	£40.	0.	0.
	For roarers of the word "Church"	£40.	0.	0.
	For a set of "No Roundhead" roarers.	£40.	0.	0.
	For several gallons of Tory-Punch on Church tombstones.	£30.	0.	0.
	For a majority of clubs and brandy bottles.	£20.	0.	0.
	For bell-ringers, f ^l idlers and porters.	£10.	0.	0.
	For a set of coffee-house praters.	£40.	0.	0.

For/

¹ The London Gazette 5294 January 15, 1715.

² The Flying Post 3599. January 27, 1715.

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For extraordinary expen ^s e for clothes and laced hats to dazzle the mob.	£50.	0.	0.
For Dissenter-damners.	£40.	0.	0.
For demolishing two houses.	£200.	0.	0.
For secret encouragement to rioters.	£40.	0.	0.
For a dozen of perjury men.	£100.	0.	0.
For Packing and carriage paid to Gloucester.	£50.	0.	0.
For breaking windows.	£20.	0.	0.
For a gang of aldermen abusers.	£40.	0.	0.
For a set of notorious lyers.	£50.	0.	0.
For pot-ale.	£100.	0.	0.
For Law and charges in the King's Bench.	<u>£300.</u>	<u>0.</u>	<u>0.</u>
	£1460.	0.	0.

Turning from this somewhat grotesque representation to the bounds of reality, one finds several examples of mobs intervening in elections. At Carlisle in 1718 about a week before the day of the election of Mayor, information was brought to the acting Mayor that there was a design to raise a mob to insult Alderman Railton and his friends if he were elected. These reports continued until the day of the election when the Mayor and Court of Aldermen requested the officer in charge of forces in Carlisle to patrol the streets. There was in consequence no disturbance, /

disturbance, though when the election was over and Alderman Pattison was elected, the mobs ran riot in the streets expressing their joy.¹ The election of a People's Church warden at Greenwich in 1722 caused an outbreak which finally had to be crushed by military force. There were two candidates for the post, Captain John Guy and a farmer John Brookes. Guy seemed to be supported by the Vicar, Dr. Skerrett, and the well-to-do parishioners; Brookes had the sympathy of the tradesmen and the more lowly members of the Vestry. Feeling became acrimonious at the first Vestry meeting on March 27 when Brookes' supporters alleged that Guy could not serve as Churchwarden because he had not served as Overseer in the Parish. Sir William Sanderson attempted to obviate this objection, whereupon the Brookes Supporters raised "a great hiss". There followed an election by the customary show of hands. This appeared to favour Guy, but Brookes demanded a poll. This was taken and the scrutineers of both sides agreed to meet later in the afternoon to count the votes. The result was to have been declared on March 29, but the scrutineers made objections to the qualifications of voters on both/

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The late Mayor of Carlisle to the Secretary of the Privy Council
Undated. (1718). S.P. Dom 35/13.

both sides, and the declaration of the poll was postponed until April 6. Tempers rose with the delays, and on April 6 a large mob of Brookes' friends surrounded the Church and prevented the Vicar reaching his vestry until he had summoned the assistance of a magistrate and a constable. Skerrett adjourned the declaration for a further three days and then forced a passage through the mob to his Vicarage. Here he was beset by voters who attempted to force their way in, while others invaded the Church steeple and rang the bells. Magistrates attempted to control the mob but were stoned and driven away to cries of "No Roundheads", "Down with the Rump" and "No Easter Offering".¹ Soldiers from the magazine eventually quelled the riot. At Hull in October 1723 a riot broke out during election time when the supporters of a candidate rushed into the very council chamber and disrupted the council meeting.² At Bridgnorth in 1733 excitement rose to fever pitch before the approaching parliamentary election of 1734 when a preliminary tussle between Whigs and Tories was fought out over the election of Bailiffs. The Tory candidates for Parliament, Sir Robert Lawly and Sir Richard Acton, gained control over the mob of the town and when the jury was locked/

¹ Report from Greenwich concerning the late riot. Undated (1722) S.P. Dorm 35/30.

² Report from the Mayor of Hull. October 26, 1723. S.P. Dorm 35/45.

locked in the Town Hall, as prescribed by local custom, to conduct the election, directed the mob to break into the Hall and to prevent the election being held.¹ The mob actually broke down the doors of the Hall but were prevented from doing great damage by the arrival of troops. The bailiffs elected were to have been sworn in a week later but such was the violence of the mob that the Mayor decided to postpone the ceremony until stronger forces arrived in the town.² At Nottingham in 1754 party feeling ran very high during a parliamentary election. On April 19, a High Church mob attacked the Castle Gate Meeting House. The woodwork was destroyed and the pulpit taken to the market place and burnt.³

Perhaps the most interesting example of election rioting, however, is that at Norwich in August, 1722, when the election of Aldermen, fought between Whigs and Tories, proved to be the occasion for risings of the city mob. At the election of Sheriff, some little time later the Tories campaigned successfully and won by 1401 to 1377 votes. Th²y Whigs, however, doubted whether many of the voters were qualified to vote and demanded a scrutiny.

At/

¹ The Whig candidates T. Whitmore and G. Grove to the Duke of Newcastle. September 23, 1733. S.P. Dorm 36/30.

² Duke of Newcastle to Whitmore and Grove. September 26, 1733. S.P. Dorm 36/30.

R. Walpole to the Duke of Newcastle. undated. S.P. Dorm 36/30.

³ Bailey. Annals of Nottinghamshire pp 1223-1225.
Henderson A.R. History of Castle Gate Congregational Church Nottingham. 1655-1905.
Session Record Books. April 23, 1754.

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At this the mob became violent again, and the frightened Whigs suggested that the Charter of the City should be amended so that Aldermen (who were mainly Whigs) should have the right of nominating sixty members of the Common Council. The Mayor and Sheriff¹ were to be chosen annually by the two bodies assembled together. The disturbances bore fruit in the "Act for better qualifying the manufacturers of stuffs and yarn in the city of Norwich and liberties thereof to bear office of magistrating² in the said City and for regulating elections of such officers". By this Act it was pointed out that by 1 & 2 Philip and Mary C 14 it had been enacted that the principal makers of ~~f~~rustians and satins were to become freemen, thus ensuring a constant supply of worthy men for the magistracy. The manufacturers of fustians and satin had, however, decayed and people of no consequence were becoming magistrates and stimulating riots at elections. Hence it was determined that all wool manufacturers, master weavers and master wool combers were to be made freemen on application before June 24, 1723 for the fee of one guinea. Furthermore, as a means of regulating elections, it was enacted that no person was to become Sheriff/

¹ S. Legge to Viscount Townshend¹ August 30, 1722. S.P.D. 35/22.

² 8 George I C.9.

Sheriff who could not prove himself to be worth at least two thousand pounds, and that at elections of the Mayor, Sheriff, Aldermen and Common Councilmen, a regular poll was to be taken and shown on request to electors. Electors of the Mayor had to be freemen; electors of Aldermen or Common Councilmen were to be inhabitants of the ward concerned. When Aldermen died, their successors were to be elected within five days.

The story of the passing of the City Elections Act of 1725 has been told in detail by A.J. Henderson in "London and the National Government".¹ It is worth remarking here, however, that the Norwich Act probably provided the government with the possible answer to the London disturbances. As early as February, 1724 the Secretary to the Lords Justices of Regency wrote the following minute of a discussion:-

"The right of electing Common Council and Aldermen in London is disputed - some hold all have a right to vote who pay to Church and poor - others say none have that right but who pay to all taxes - the Tories who are of the former opinion are bringing in a Bill in Common Council to establish the rights in that manner by/

¹ ibid pp 74-115.

by which all their rabble will have votes - the only way to preserve this would be by a Clause in the Norwich Bill or some other Bill to declare that Scot and Lot means all taxes in a Corporation - the Tory Common Council have already appointed a Committee to prepare a Bill for the Common Council to pass".¹

In both London and Norwich the problem facing the Government was identical; it was the control of local elections so that the anti-government force in the Common Councils should be rendered impotent and that the power of the "Mobile" so ably harnessed by the Common Council should give way to the pro-government rule of the Aldermen.

The most tantalising feature of the above mob actions where mobs were directed by mob-raisers is the lack of documentary proof that such direction was exercised. Allegation of mob control there was in abundance, but nothing in the way of concrete evidence. This is perhaps not natural; mob-raisers would least of all people be expected to leave documentary proof of their activities.²

It is a curious transition to turn from the boisterous atmosphere of election mobs to a mob which would seem to be inspired chiefly/

¹ Minutes of the Lords Justices. S.P. Doym 35/47.

² The nearest approach to proof of the organisation of a mob is perhaps Walpole's well-known statement on March 14, 1733 before the House of Commons when he described circular letters carried by the Beadles around every ward in the city. These letters summoned the Livery men and Tradesmen to attend upon their peril at Westminster. Walpole claimed that he had a copy of this circular, signed by a Deputy of "one of the greatest wards in the city of London".

chiefly by a feeling of conservative reverence. In 1726 the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln Cathedral decided on the advice of two architects to secure the safety of the main structure of the Cathedral by removing the Tower Spires. A start was made ~~the~~^{on} the demolition in September, but when a considerable breach had been made and four and a half tons of lead had been stripped from the Great Tom Spire, a mob from the City demonstrated furiously outside the Cathedral and were subdued only by the efforts of a volunteer band of masons and wealthy citizens armed with pistols. The Chancellor of Lincoln approached the Mayor, Hezekiah Brown, on the following morning (September 20) to show him the architects' reports and to convince him of the absolute necessity of the repairs. The ecclesiastical authorities suspected that the Mayor and Corporation sympathised with the rioters and were not exerting themselves sufficiently to control the city scum. The Chancellor agreed to stop all work on the Spires until the reasons for removal had been made public and had been generally accepted. As the news of this decision became known in the streets, a mob of five hundred gathered together and visited the Chancellor, Dean and Subdean demanding money for drink - and having drunk, concluded a merry evening by breaking windows in Presbyterian houses. The Dean and Chapter were sufficiently terrified to order the replacement of all bricks/

bricks and lead hitherto removed.¹

For three weeks there was peace in the City, but in the middle of October the mob rose up and demanded that St. Hugh's Bells be rung and that pinnacles removed from the Middle Tower be immediately replaced.² The first was positively dangerous according to the architects, who also thought that the replacement of the pinnacles was impossible with winter approaching. The Chapter feared a mob rising on November 5 and thought that a notice might be inserted in "The Evening Post" - the only paper coming to Lincoln at that time - to the effect that a regiment of soldiers was to arrive at Lincoln early in November and, secondly, that the Bishop of Lincoln might induce the government to send a "smart" letter to the Mayor and Corporation who had done nothing to appease the rioters. Such was the fear of the mob that the letter to London was taken to Grantham for postage.³

The letter from the Government,⁴ a "smart" one indeed, was written at once by Townshend to Mayor Brown who promptly submitted the Corporation version of the riots. This agreed with the accounts/

¹ H. Hasledine to the Dean of Lincoln. September 24, 1726. S.P.D. 35/63.
Report of Architects James and Gibbs to the Bishop, Dean and Chapter enclosed.

² J. Wilkins to the Dean of Lincoln. undated S.P. Dorm 35/63.

³ The Carrington to the Dean of Lincoln. October 19, 1726. S.P. Dorm 35/63

⁴ Townshend to the Mayor of Lincoln. October 22, 1726. S.P. Dorm 35/63

accounts reported by the Bishop, but pointed out that the riots had taken place outside the liberties of the City and in the Close of the Cathedral where the City magistrates had no jurisdiction. In the city itself the mobs had behaved quietly. The magistrates had indeed tried their utmost to determine the identities of the rioters but had failed. It was their opinion that no respectable citizens were involved and that the rioters were the scum of the populace; no tradesman or honest shop-keeper had been concerned. However, to prevent any future risings, the magistrates had warned all house-holders and "masters of families" to keep a strict watch over their servants¹ and apprentices.

Mayor Brown's explanations do indeed seem more reasonable than the somewhat wild allegations made by the clergy. The Bishop of Lincoln insisted that the movement against the removal of the Spires was an indication of a widespread disaffection to the State, and that the last year's mayor, Kent, who had been in office during the September riots, had sympathised openly with the rioters; further, that there was "a written Association or Combination/

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Mayor of Lincoln to Viscount Townshend. October 24, 1726.

S.P. Dorm 35/63.

Mayor and Aldermen of Lincoln to Viscount Townshend.

October 29, 1726. S.P. Dorm 35/63.

Combination of the rioters"¹ to prevent the pulling down of the Spires. Again, "Whatever their (the rioters) particular pretences may be, as occasion turn up, their general design is one and the same, viz. to disquiet the government and show their disaffection to it."² This was, as far as one can see, a completely erroneous allegation, there being, apart from this suggestion of the Bishop's, no trace of disaffection to the government. The plain fact of the matter was that the Lincoln mob had an affection for the cathedral spires and regarded their removal as unnecessary. Their protest was indeed successful, for the spires were not finally removed until 1813.

The problem of cheap Irish labour caused occasional riots. In July 1736 riots broke out at Shoreditch and Spittlefields because Irish labourers and weavers were working at "under-rates". The English weavers attacked the houses where the Irish lodged, almost demolished two public houses kept by Irishmen and were only beaten off by the use of firearms. During the skirmish one man was killed and seven or eight seriously injured. The magistrates and Trained Bands proved unable to quell the tumult and a party of Horse and foot soldiers had to be called in.³

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¹ The Bishop of Lincoln to Townshend. November 1, 1726.
S.P. Dorn 35/63.

² *ibid.*

³ Gentleman's Magazine. Vol. VI. pp 422 and 425.
Report of the Deputy Lieutenants for the Tower Hamlets
(undated) S.P. Dorn 36/39.

In Dartford, Kent, a few days earlier, trouble had broken out for the same reason and order was not restored until the Irish labourers were discharged. Riots also occurred at Rag Fair on July 31, and again peace was not restored until the military had been called in. Similar trouble was experienced in the Isle of Ely in September 1737 when a body of Irishmen "Who swarm there for harvest work" plundered the village of Berwich after a dispute with the local labourers, and threatened to do likewise¹ to the town of March.

It is strange to find an occasional small disturbance caused by a continuing belief in witchcraft. At Oakley, three miles from Bedford, a mob rose in July 1737 and attacked an unfortunate old woman who they alleged had evil powers. The mob put the woman to a water test whereby her innocence was established if she sank. The "witch" persisted in floating, and this so incensed the mob against her that she was lucky to escape with her life.² At Tring, Hertfordshire in April, 1751 a mob of villagers led by a chimney sweep, Colley, attacked the workhouse at Tring and demanded that the Keeper, John Tomkins, should yield/

¹ Caledonian Mercury 2729. September 29, 1737.

² Caledonian Mercury 2702. July 26, 1737.

yield unto them "the old witch and wizard". Tomkins had hidden the couple (who were alleged to have bewitched a publican) in the vestry room of Tring Church, but after seeing his workhouse pillaged and, being threatened with its total destruction, informed the mob of the whereabouts of the supposed sorcerers who were immediately routed out and hurried to the village pond. The old woman, Ruth Osborne, was wrapped in a sheet and pulled twice through the pond while the mob hurled curses at her as a witch. Not unnaturally, she died. This must surely be one of the latest attempts at dealing with elderly women who by accident¹ had acquired evil reputations as agents of the devil.

Finally, there were the Gin Riots. These have attracted attention and acquired notoriety, but, in that they were essentially the work of mobs of limited size, they are included in the present Chapter.

The prevalence of gin-drinking over the years 1720-1751 and the resulting rise in the death rate (as shown by the Bills of Mortality for the same period) have already been made the subject of a detailed and expert study.² It is proposed here to describe/

¹ Coroner's Report on Ruth Osborne. April 25, 1751. S.P. Dorm 36/116.

Gentlemen's Magazine. Vol. XXI. p. 186. April, 1751.

Colley was tried at Hertford Assizes on July 30 and hanged at Gubblecat Cross on August 24. At his execution he was attended by a large mob who thought it a shame he should hang for an old witch.

² George M.D. London Life in the Eighteenth Century. pp.27-35.

describe popular reaction to the Gin Act of 1736, the first serious attempt at restraining gin consumption.

The Act was to take effect from Michaelmas 1736. The government had reason to believe that its enforcement would be opposed by outbreaks of rioting,¹ and posted double guards at Kensington, St. James's Tilt Yard, Whitehall and Somerset House, while four hundred Life Guards and to^w hundred Grenadier Guards patrolled St. James's Park.² On September 30, however, the day[~] of which the Act came into force, all was quiet. People flocked as usual to the gin-shops, "but being refused their darling cordial, begged the liberty to smell at the empty casks and bottles, which was allowed."³ Early reports from London were optimistic concerning the success of the Act. An improvement in the behaviour of the masses was observed as early as October 5. "There is already seen such a reformation by this Act as is very remarkable and no less pleasing to all those who have long wished for such a happy change, the night now being in effect as free as noonday of Drunken, loose and debauched people of both sexes strolling along the streets with horrible oaths and/

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- ¹ Pulteney, in particular, had stressed the likelihood of rioting in debate. Parlt'y. Hist. IX p. 1039.
- ² Hardwicke used the efficiency of these troops as an argument in favour of a standing army Gentleman's Magazine July, 1737. Vol. VII pp. 373-411.
- ³ Caledonian Mercury 2576 October 5, 1736. (The Mercury is a surprisingly detailed source of information on London events)

and imprecations."¹ In these early months it would indeed seem² that numbers of gin-houses did close down.

This, unfortunately, did not mean that gin-drinking was greatly diminished, for many and various were the means of circumventing the provisions of the Act. Apothecaries continued³ to sell gin on the grounds that it was a medicine. Street Hawkers found their business greatly improved and sold gin to the cry of "Ink, Brass, Cocks"⁴ or "Bung your eye"⁵ - cries which⁶ deceived nobody. Owners of gin shops also resorted to artifice, and, as the months passed, gradually resumed their activities openly; this may be deduced from the increasing number of informations presented in the summer of 1737. There were other signs that the Act was being tacitly ignored. On November 8, 1736, an innkeeper at Chester named Smith took out a licence for retailing gin as instructed by the Act. He was the third man⁷ in the whole of England to do so; he was also the last.⁸ Thus the/

¹ Caledonian Mercury 2578. October 11, 1736.

² "Mother Gin has died quietly". Caledonian Mercury October 11, 1736.

"The Geneva Trade is almost banished from the houses."
Caledonian Mercury October 28, 1736

³ Caledonian Mercury 2581, October 18, 1736.

⁴ Caledonian Mercury 2583, October 22, 1736.

⁵ Caledonian Mercury 2741, October 25, 1737.

⁶ A common device was a movable drawer installed in the wall of gin-shops. A buyer approached the shop and called out "Puss" and received the answer "Mew" from within. The drawer was pushed forwards, the buyer's money placed therein, the drawer withdrawn, and with gin substituted for the money, pushed out again. In this way "Puss and Mew" circumvented the Act.

⁷ Caledonian Mercury 2705 August 2, 1737.

⁸ Caledonian Mercury 2715 August 25, 1737.

the licensing provision was ^{almost} ~~almost~~ completely ignored. Again, despite the constant stream of prosecutions resulting from informations, the number of prosecutions each month showed no sign of lessening. By the summer of 1737 it would seem that the Act was being quietly by-passed by the greater number of retailers.

So far there had been no mob action or disorders of any kind. As, however, gin retailers became less cautious and sold gin openly in the summer months, so informers appeared in large numbers; this in turn led to retaliatory action on the part of mobs, mobs which were as brutal as any during these years. On July 28 an informer was stoned and killed by a mob in New Palace Yard,¹ while two more were beaten to death on August 19.² In October an informer at Bristol was tarred and feathered,³ and a mob at Norwich killed another in December.⁴ In London the height of mob fury was reached in November when the London Magistrate De Veil convicted six persons of retailing gin. One of the informers was seized and beaten by the mob, and De Veil's house/

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- 1 Caledonian Mercury 2705 August 2, 1737.
 - 2 Caledonian Mercury 2715 August 25, 1737.
 - 3 Caledonian Mercury 2738 October 18, 1737.
Daily Post October 26, 1737.
 - 4 Caledonian Mercury 2774. January 10, 1738.

house was threatened by an ugly-looking crowd. De Veil was¹ forced to send for military help to disperse the rioters. Soon afterwards, the mob beat another informer to death, and at the beginning of December a party of guards from Somerset House had² to disperse a mob which was stoning two informers. In January, 1738 the Horse Guards had to disperse a mob which had caught an³ informer in Pulteney Street, and in February at least one in-⁴former was killed, and several others were seriously wounded. Many other informers were undoubtedly beaten during these months.

The activities of the informer in the second half of 1737 had indeed outraged not only the feeling of the lower classes who made up the mobs, but also public opinion generally. Thus the "Caledonian Mercury", which had welcomed the passing of the Gin Act, expressed its opinion concerning informers in November, 1737.

"Tis wished that instead of poor people being daily sent to Bridewell, fined etc., for selling spirituous liquors, which perhaps want and necessity compels them to, we could hear of footpads, house-breakers, highwaymen, and other rogues being taken up and punished the wisest nations have always been cautious how they encouraged mercenary informers, because such encouragement/

¹ Daily Post December 10, 1737.

Caledonian Mercury 2757 December 1, 1737.

See also George op. cit. for notes on De Veil p. 332

² Caledonian Mercury 2760 December 8, 1737.

³ Caledonian Mercury 2775 January 12, 1738.

London Daily Post and General Advertiser, January 24, 1738.

⁴ Caledonian Mercury 2792 February 21, 1738.
2795 February 28, 1738.

encouragement may soon corrupt the minds of the people
 with what horror then can an Englishman behold such a catalogue
 of informers in our weekly and daily newspapers and so many poor
 people sent to Bridewell no great wonder then that we see
 the mob dragging them in rage."¹

The government and magistrates in March, 1738, made a final
 attempt to enforce the Act. On March 18, a Proclamation was
 issued promising protection for magistrates and informers in the
 execution of their duty. At a meeting of the Westminster
 magistrates on March 31, all chief and petty constables were ex-
 horted to put the Gin Law into execution. Twelve constables
 were to attend the magistrates each day so that riots might be
 easily suppressed.² On April 11 the magistrates for Westminster
 pointed out in the "Daily Advertiser" that they had come to a
 resolution that "one great cause of the riots and opposition to
 the execution of laws against spirituous liquors was from the
 great number of persons serving the office of High Constable
 Constables and Headboroughs who are dealers in liquors".³ Further,
 that constables who served warrants against liquor retailers had
 fallen into the habit of doing so with their long staves. This
 was/

¹ Caledonian Mercury 2747 November 8, 1738.

² "Daily Post March 28, 1738.

³ The Daily Post April 4, 1738. 5792.

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was an accepted signal for the raising of the mob.¹ Early in May, it was reported that for the future no victualler, distiller coffee-men or any other person whatsoever dealing in spirituous liquors would be admitted to serve as constable or headborough.

There is no evidence to show that this belated effort at enforcement was successful. Indeed, opinion still raged furiously against informers, and this was reflected in a letter from the King to the Middlesex magistrates in August, 1738, wherein all magistrates were enjoined to punish severely any informers who were proved to have been guilty of perjury.² Magistrates had, in fact, already been sending perjurers "on board ship",³ and this had discouraged the professional informers. Another factor which discouraged the informer was the inability of many convicted liquor retailers to pay the £100 fine. As the £5 reward for information was deducted from the fine, many informers went unpaid. Thus in December, 1738, it was estimated that some five hundred informers had not received their reward;⁴ again, in January, 1739, the executors of Edward Parker laid claims on the Excise Office for £1,600 due for informations received.⁵

By March, 1739, it was noted that "the practice of informing against retailers of spiritous liquors seems now at an end, the Justices/

¹ The Daily Post April 13, 1738.

² Caledonian Mercury 2867 August 15, 1738.

³ Caledonian Mercury 2869 August 21, 1738.

⁴ Caledonian Mercury 2917 December 11, 1738.

⁵ Caledonian Mercury 2930 January 9, 1738.

Justices finding prosecutions that way mostly malicious and attended with perjuries."¹ With the cessation of informers' activities the Act itself, which depended for its success on informations, ceased to operate. By 1743 the sale of gin had increased to a maximum for the period of 8,000,000 gallons.²

It has been said of the 1736 Gin Act that "The Government and the magistrates had been defeated by the mob".³ This is not the whole truth. The Act was becoming a dead letter before the mobs got up in the Summer of 1737, and its chances of success were always slight by reason of the opposition not only of masses of gin-drinkers but also of farmers and corn merchants. Again, the £100 fine was too stringent a financial penalty on gin retailers who were often very poor people,; Their inability to pay such a fine - and the consequent disappointment of the informer, - was one reason why the informer gradually disappeared. There were all factors combining to make the enforcement of the Act difficult. The small and brutal gin-mobs constituted another factor. By harassing and killing informers they achieved a double purpose. They discouraged the practice of informing, and they succeeded in swinging the focus of the public conscience from the wholesale drinking/

¹ Caledonian Mercury 2964 March 29, 1739.

² George op. cit. p. 35.

³ George op. cit. pp. 35-36.

drinking of gin (Which as the Duke of Newcastle stressed was
indefensible ¹) to the evils of informing. And thus the popular
rhyme ran:-

"Informers, crying Sin!

Are more destructive fifteen times than gin." ²

It was ~~in~~ the discrediting of an essential part of the machinery
of the Gin Act that was the main function of the mob.

¹ Duke of Newcastle's speech on recent riots. Gentleman's
Magazine. Vol. VII 373-411.

² Caledonian Mercury 2929. January 8, 1739.

XI. KINGSWOOD. AN AREA OF RIOT.

Coal had been mined in the Ancient Forest of Kingswood from approximately 1200 A.D., but only on a large scale after 1660 when the Lords of the Manor in the whole district claimed the "liberty" of cutting wood and mining coal. The actual mining was carried on by Adventurers who were tenants-at-will of the Lords of the Manor, paying a certain sum out^{of} every twenty shillings worth of coal sold per week or per month. By 1670 there were over two hundred colliers' cottages and some seventy pits. The last deer disappeared at this time, partly because they were hunted by the miners who were already notorious for their violence, and partly because the "browse" upon which the deer existed was being used for pit props. By the beginning of the Eighteenth Century many thousands were employed as colliers and there were also brass works (referred to as "cupolas" by the colliers), glass works, and lead works. Kingswood had a reputation for crime throughout the century and it was only in 1815 that a Mayor of Bristol raided the area and took the entire male population of Cock Road into custody. Before this it had been common practice for the riff-raff of Kingswood to stand in gangs on the London Road demanding "safety" money from passers-by. On each Landsdowne Fair Day country people going into Bristol were expected/

expected to pay 10/6 and eventually the colliers were regarded as professional blackmailers as well as mercenaries willing to fight in any cause against law and order.¹ In 1726 the weavers of Bradford-on-Avon sent to Kingswood to ask the colliers to march to Bradford to help them in their struggle against the Clothiers, so well were Kingswood colliers known for their ability as rioters.² They were, indeed, "a set of ungovernable people violent in their way",³ and rank as the most prominent rioters in the country over the period 1714-54. They rioted for three main reasons; against the erection of Turnpike gates in 1727 and 1748, against the exactions of the pit owners in 1738, and because of the high price and shortage of corn in 1753.

When gates were erected around Bristol in 1727⁴ a mob of several hundred colliers processed systematically from gate to gate destroying each in turn and on their way passing through the city to the terror of the Corporation and inhabitants, who were forced to give "safety" money to the less scrupulous members of the mob. In retaliation, the Trustees considered/

¹ For the local history of the area see Jones A.E. History of Mangotsfield and Downend and Braine A. History of Kingswood Forest.

² See Chapter II on Rioting in the ^{Cloth} ~~Cloth~~ Industry of the South West.

³ Mayor of Bristol to Duke of Newcastle S.P. Don 36/111 August 1749.

⁴ See Chapter V Part I on Turnpike Riots.

considered bringing an action against the whole body of the colliers for Riot and Rebellion, and indicting them as Common Rogues.¹ A semi-skilled hand drew up a reply² for the colliers five days after the riot and ridiculed the measures the Trustees proposed to take to remedy the state of the roads, namely the cutting of "fuzz" and beath from the common land. This, the unknown writer argued, was but poor service for the heavy toll, and anyway, there would have been no need for a toll of any kind had the justices done their duty and seen to the upkeep of the roads as was their duty. Not only had the justices been lazy; as landowners they had considerably injured the surface of the roads by continually scraping them for manure. The Act was, in the writer's opinion, insincere in purpose and "purchased" to bring in money for the Trustees or as he put it,

"Now Turnpikes are grown ⁱⁿ fashion
The hardest Tax in all the nation
For where Wine and Women and Stockjobbing past
The Turnpike must help ~~us~~ at last".

The Writer concluded with a request that any future Act should/

1

Trustees of the British Turnpike Trust to the Duke of Newcastle Hardwicke Papers B.M. Add Mss 36136 ff304.

2

The Colliers' letter to the Turnpike July 3rd 1727.
Gloucestershire Archives.

should contain no Latin, and the sincere hope that the Trustees would better themselves by devoting their profits to the buying of Catechisms, "which you may have for two pence apiece"

The gates around^d Bristol were re-erected,¹ though as the Trustees died off, so did the administration of the gates become less efficient, and a second Act was passed in 1749⁽¹⁾ enabling a new body of Trustees to set up gates. Rioting by country folks of Gloucester and Somerset broke out on July 22nd, but it was only on August 2nd that some colliers decided to join the rioting, and even then most stayed in the pits working. The colliers were persuaded to rise by Somerset farmers, who gave out sums of money as bribes. The mixed body of country folks and colliers destroyed three gates, but gradually disintegrated and retired^t to their various homes. Two days later the colliers of Clutton, Paulton and Keynsham, who had agreed to act with the colliers of Kingswood, arrived at Kingswood to find that the colliers there would have nothing more to do with the movement. They were naturally enraged to find that this journey had been in vain and they were, in fact/

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Petition for payment by S. Jones, Carpenter. Bristol
Common Council Minutes September 15th, 1729.

fact, with difficulty dissuaded from hanging one of the leaders¹ of the Kingswood area and from pulling down the leaders' houses

The Kingswood colliers had hardly lived up to their reputation in 1749 but after all, they had no real motive in 1727 or in 1749 for destroying the gates, which allowed pedestrians through free, nor could they be expected to feel bitterly about the cause of Somerset and Gloucester labourers and farmers. Another reason for the lack of support given by the colliers in 1749 might be found in the work done by the Wesley brothers since 1739. Evangelists had probably been at work in Kingswood before this date and the immediate success of the Methodists points perhaps to a measure of preparation by less famous workers. John Wesley arrived in the forest area in April, 1739 and preached to audiences of several thousands colliers. By July he had gained such a hold there that he had begun^u to build a school and in November he was able to write. "The scene is already changed, Kingswood does not now, as a year ago, resound with cursing and blasphemy. It is no more filled with drunkenness and uncleanness, and the idle diversions/

¹ Bristol Oracle No. 1662. August 12th, 1749.

diversions that naturally lead hereto. It is no longer full of war and fightings, of rumour and bitterness, of wrath and envoysings".¹ Wesley's reception at Kingswood contrasted favourably with that accorded him in Bristol, where he was the object of the insults of the mob. In 1740 during the period of unrest caused by food shortage, an incident occurred which gives support to Wesley's claim to have changed the character of Kingswood. A body of a thousand starving colliers had banded together to march on Bristol. Charles Wesley stopped them at Lawford's Gate and persuaded the leader and the greater part of the mob to return to the Methodist School where they prayed until the colliers who had gone into the city returned in two hours' time.² The latter had behaved with moderation at Bristol and, after hearing an assurance from the Mayor that everything possible would be done to improve supplies of food, walked quietly back to Kingswood. It is noticeable too, that when the first Friendly Society was formed in 1756, no sick benefit was allowed if a member had received injuries while "mobbing"./

¹ John Wesley. Diary November 1739.

² Sayers G. "Wesley and Kingswood and the Free Churches".

"mobbing". The collier was still a rough character, but rioting had ceased to be regarded with universal approval by miners, nor was it resorted to as an accepted means of enjoyment. In the second half of the century, as in 1753¹ and in 1772, Kingswood rioted only under great provocation and real hardship.

In 1738 the colliers rioted over a matter concerning their own industrial conditions. Trouble began when several of the more intelligent pit-owners discovered a cheaper method of producing coal, and proceeded to undersell their rivals in the sale of small-coal to the brass and glass producers. The answer to this on the part of the more conservative pit owners was the lowering of their own labourers' wages from 1/4 to 1/- per day.² The colliers affected gathered together immediately and were organised by leaders into a striking force with the object of guarding all roads leading into Bristol so that no coal should be taken through to the city. This policy was carried out on October 9th. The leaders attempted to persuade the colliers of Brislington to rise in sympathy, but this was unsuccessful. One of the parties unfortunately became/

¹ Aspinall A: The History of Early English Trade Unions. pp. 6 - 7.

² Gloucester Journal 854 Tuesday October 17th 1738.

became inflamed after several visits to taverns, and made a prolonged attempt to catch and hang a Sheriff's bailiff who had incurred their hatred by his previous behaviour. Failing in this, fortunately, the same party decided to move into Bristol where they upset coal waggons, cut open sacks of coal and destroyed pack-saddles.¹ The rioting in Kingswood itself continued for two days. The rioters filled in pits and destroyed mining gear. The roads were regularly patrolled, and all road users were forced to pay toll on the grounds that "somebody had to keep colliers alive".²

The Mayor of Bristol, William Jefferis, was not unduly worried about the safety of Bristol as there were soldiers already in the city. He had taken the precaution of doubling the watch. What he really wanted, however, from Newcastle was permission to attack the colliers in their own houses.³ These lay outside the city boundaries, a fact which always proved a nuisance and hindrance to the corporation and a protection for the colliers. The permission for this raid did/

¹ Mayor of Bristol to Newcastle 7th October 1738. S.P.Dom. 36/46

² Mayor of Bristol to Newcastle 9th October 1738 S.P.Dom. 36/46

³ Mayor of Bristol to Newcastle 14th October 1738 S.P.Dom. 36/46

did in fact arrive ¹ and had not the rioting already ^{ceased} caused Mayor Jefferis would undoubtedly have marched out into Kingswood. It is interesting to speculate what the effect of a direct attack from the Bristol authorities, made seventy years before the successful raid of 1815, would have had on life in Kingswood during the rest of the century. Jefferis was quite unable to obtain a single information that would help to convict the leaders of the mobs, and this despite the offer of tempting rewards and the publications of pardons for informers. Fear, of course, might well have prevented informers appearing, but the communal share of responsibility among colliers is probably a better reason for the complete silence.²

The final outburst of rioting during the period under review came during the corn scarcity of 1753. During the bad harvests of 1739-40 the colliers made only one demonstration march into Bristol, and this movement was checked, as already shown, through the intervention and influence of the Wesleys.

In 1753 the colliers, who were suffering a food shortage, were tantalised by the sight of loads of corn being taken along the/

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Mayor of Bristol to Newcastle 15th October 1738 S.P.Dom.36/46

²

Mayor of Bristol to Newcastle December 9th, 1738 S.P.Dom.36/46

the roads in their area for export from Bristol.¹ At the end of May the colliers presented a petition to the Mayor asking that exportation should cease. The Mayor, Clements, promised to do what he could for them which was, as he confided to Newcastle, nothing. The greater part of the rioters returned home, but a more desperate section attacked a corn ship loaded with corn for Dublin, then lying at the quay. There were no soldiers in Bristol at the time, and it was left to the constables and a civilian force to deal with the rioters, who naturally had no difficulty in sweeping aside such a puny opposition and removing what corn they wanted before returning to the Guildhall and smashing the windows there. A few ^{noted} ~~authorities~~ were apprehended but were immediately discharged by the magistrates "after gentle reproof and advice".² Clements was in no position to take harsh measures and wrote immediately to Newcastle for help, as a second riot was expected and "as the place they come from is very populous and has in it a great number of underground workmen who are but little known; and on that account very ^{desperate} ~~important~~ fellows".³

Four/

¹ Read's Weekly Journal August 4, 1753 1481.

² Gloucester Journal No. 1612 May 29th 1753.

³ Mayor of Bristol to Newcastle 21st May 1753 S.O.Dom 36/122.

Four days later, on May 25th, the colliers made a second attack on the city and rescued a fellow workmen imprisoned at the Bridewell since the previous riot.¹ The citizens of Bristol had, during the course of the week, been formed into an armed militia under the command of the constables. This civilian force, organised and equipped, performed nobly and, after recovering from the initial shock of the attack, cleared the city of rioters. Four of the rioters were killed and forty taken prisoner. The Corporation and wealthy citizens of Bristol were particularly worried about the second attack because the attacking colliers had been joined by weavers from the country, and the poor of Bristol itself supported the rioters wholeheartedly. Clements again appealed for help from the government and Henry Fox, the Secretary-at-War, decided to order forces from Gloucester, Worcester and Sherbourne to proceed to Bristol. Fortunately the rioters had been crushed by the stout opposition of the constables and citizens, and these military reinforcements proved unnecessary.

On/

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Mayor of Bristol to Newcastle 25th May 1753. S.P. Dom 36/122
Read's Weekly Journal August 4th, 1753.

On the Tuesday following the Friday of the "battle" a petition was brought from the wounded colliers to the Mayor begging that surgeons be sent out to Kingswood to dress their wounds. This was granted immediately, and the wealthier inhabitants made a collection of money gifts and provided for the families of the wounded. The benevolence of the city was partly due to the fact that the colliers had taken hostages on their retreat from the city, partly to the city's feeling that it had shown its strength in the riot and could afford to be generous to the defeated,¹ but mostly perhaps because of the recognition that the colliers were suffering real economic hardships. The same generous spirit seems to have pervaded the Assizes in September when the more active rioters were put on trial. The sentences imposed were light - small fines and short terms of imprisonment - and when six ^{colliers} ~~colliers~~ petitioned against their sentences on the ground that they had been forced to take part in the riot by weavers, the government left the matter to be decided by the Mayor and Corporation.² Throughout the conduct of the Bristol authorities was marked by benevolence and a desire to appease.

Surveying/

¹ Felix Farley's Bristol Journal June 2-9th, 1753.

² Appeal of six colliers January 3, 1754. S.P.Dom 36/125
Reply of Solicitor General January 17, 1754 S.P.Dom. 36/125.

Surveying these riots, it is with some surprise that one recalls the notoriety and evil reputation of the colliers of Kingswood.¹ On one occasion only can their actions be termed irresponsible, that is, in 1727, when they destroyed turnpikes which would have made no difference to them as pedestrians. On other occasions, there was a grievance to which the only answer was group action, and in the organisation of these actions the discipline of the collier is noticeable. Subject to no form of regular local government, he yet submitted himself to the direction of acknowledged "leaders".

After the arrival of the Wesleys, there is a feeling that Kingswood has developed a sense of social responsibility and is no longer a centre for wanton rioting. An industrialised centre thrust into the Eighteenth Century framework, it was making its own effort to attain some respectability. Crime admittedly, did flourish throughout the century² but this is an indictment not of the greater part of the community but of the evil characters who were themselves the bye-products of the brutality, lack of responsibility, and sense of social isolation which were once the supposed traits of the entire Kingswood population.

¹ c.f. Mathers: History of Bristol (1793)

² ("Stories of Kingswood"
See Wintner D ("More Kingswood Stories", and "Trapped in the Pit (The Central Press, Kingswood) for more evidence concerning crime during the later part of the Eighteenth Century.

PART II.

I. THE MAGISTRATE.

The years 1714-54 come within a period when the Justices of the Peace assumed the most imposing role in local government, possessed of ever-increasing powers and subject to few restrictions by the central government.¹ The list given by Burn in "The Justices of the Peace and Parish Officer"² gives an indication of the extent of his activities, covering matters "alike judicial, administrative, and legislative"³ and touching fields as scattered as commerce and industry, highways, poor law and vagrants, to mention but a few.

The primary duty of the magistrate was, nevertheless, the preservation of peace within the administrative area, be it county or borough.⁴ He might be - and frequently was - lax in the performance of his other multifarious duties, secure in the knowledge that the central executive machine was neither large nor efficient enough to check his work and that, in any case, the worst punishment for neglect of duty was dismissal.⁵
At/

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- 1 Thompson M.A. A Constitutional History of England. 1642-1801
Webb B. & S. The Parish and County. pp 309-10. p. 456.
 - 2 Examined in detail in Holdsworth, A History of English Law.
Vo. X. pp 161-2.
 - 3 Thompson op. cit. p. 459.
 - 4 Holdsworth. Vol. X. p. 161.
 - 5 Thompson. p. 454.

At the same time, he knew that internal peace was a fundamental of government insisted on above all things by rulers who were otherwise not exacting or inquisitive. Riots were naturally of the highest importance to a government uncertain of its strength in the country and faced with the possibility of Jacobite invasions.

It has been remarked that the years between the accession of the House of Hanover and the close of the Napoleonic War constituted a period when "local administrators were most effectively free from superiord control"¹ The magistrate confronted with riot provides the exception to this generalia^stion for the simple reason that he was generally speaking unable to quell disturbances of any size by his own authority and had perforce to approach the government for military help. This very appeal brought about an exceptional contact, experienced on no other occasion. It might, indeed, be claimed that an eighteenth century government knew its subjects only in time of riot when deep-rooted fears and miseries were flung into the focus of attention for a brief while.

The/

1 Webb op. cit. pp 309-10.

The inability of the magistrate to deal with riots on his own authority was due, of course, to the lack of a professional police force. It has been shown elsewhere¹ that, in the cases where justices dealt with rioters without recourse to military help a semi-professional body of constables or a strong civilian force was in being, that military help was easily obtainable if need arose, and that a great deal depended on the strong lead given by magistrates. In the greater part of the country, however, such bodies did not exist and the magistrate had his own personality and wits to rely on, neither of much account, anyway, against the presence of a mob. No magistrates could have had greater authority than John Hedworth² in Durham or Edward Prideaux in Cornwall, yet on their own they could do nothing with their rioting country-folk. At any time it required a brave man to face a mob, but the magistrate's position was undoubtedly made more difficult by the provisions of the 1715 Riot Act. According to the Act,³ the magistrate should approach the rioters "or as near/

1 See Chapter II on "Constables".

2 Cf. Hughes E. North Country Life in the Eighteenth Century.
pp. 10-12.

3 I George I. 2. c 5.

near as he can safely come" and read a Proclamation charging all persons assembled to disperse. There was, strictly speaking, no absolute necessity for a magistrate to go through the procedure of reading and waiting for the statutory hour; if the circumstances so required, a magistrate could suppress riot at once or as he thought fit. It became customary, however, to read the Proclamation and in this way the magistrate was exposed to considerable personal danger. One can only wonder at the frequency of occasions on which magistrates were willing and brave enough to walk out to a mob and attempt to make the Proclamation. The dangers of the magistrate's task may best be illustrated by a short list of some of the incidents of the period.

The Mayor of Oxford in 1715 attempted to defend a King's Messenger from the murderous assault of a town mob, read the Proclamation and was thrown to the ground and forced to run for his life.¹ Two years later the magistrates of Bradminch in Devon attempted to disperse riotous weavers, and were sorely/

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- 1 Nathan Willcox to Secretary of State. 1715? S.P.Dom. 35/2.
 - 2 Mayor of Tiverton to Secretary of State. 23rd Oct., 1717.
S.P.Dom. 35/10.
 - 3 Account of a Riot in Greenwich in March 1722. S.P.Dom. 35/30.

sorely beaten for their pains.¹ The rioters of Greenwich in 1722, considered they had as much right to be on the streets as the magistrates, said so, and drove the magistrates away by throwing stones.² A magistrate of Gloucestershire who in 1731 rode out to suppress a mob of colliers found himself taken prisoner before having time to read the Proclamation; furthermore, before being released he had to sign an order for the release of all colliers already apprehended. He remarked angrily to Newcastle afterwards that it was high time Parliament "made some more effectual Law to ^{protect} ~~prevent~~ us justices."³ Parliament, however, did nothing nor is it easy to see what could have been done. Justices continued to face rioters at considerable personal risk. During the 1740 Corn Riots two Flintshire magistrates were forced to run for their lives and spent several days in extreme discomfort under a hedge with a mob of colliers roaming the fields around in search of them.⁴ The fate of the Mayor and Corporation of Newcastle in the same year was to be forcibly ejected from their/

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- 1 Mayor of Tiverton to Secretary of State. 23rd Oct. 1717.
S.P. Dom. 35/2.
- 2 Account of a Riot in Greenwich in March 1722. S.P. Dom. 35/30.
- 3 Sir W. Codrington to the Duke of Newcastle. July 14, 1731.
S.P. Dom. 36/50.
- 4 E. Colley to Sir George Wynne, Bart. May 25, 1740.
S.P. Dom. 36/50.

their own Guildhall and to watch its destruction¹, They indeed considered themselves lucky to be alive, as did the magistrates of Norwich a month afterwards, who were saved from a mob which retreated only when five of its members had been killed.² In 1753 a mob at Leeds showed similar intentions of murdering the magistrates but were prevented by the military.³

These illustrations have been given to emphasise the helplessness and dangerous position of the magistrate in that grim period before military help arrived, and to show how necessary such help was. No further explanation is needed of the immediate appeals by magistrates to London for help when rioting had broken out.

The arrival of troops did not alter the fact that the magistrate bore responsibility for his administrative area. The initiative in action was his and, provided he was present in person, he could rely on support from the officer-in-charge. Indeed, as the years went by, soldiers tended increasingly to regard the presence of a magistrate as an insurance against murder/

1 See Chapter I Part I on Corn Rioting.

2 Mayor of Norwich to the Duke of Newcastle. July 9, 1740.
S.P. Dom. 36/51.

3 Mayor of Leeds to the Duke of Newcastle. July 1, 1753.
S.P. Dom. 36/122.

murder charges proferred against them by relatives or friends of rioters killed during an incident.¹ The government expected magistrates to quell riots at all costs, and saw to it that they achieved the necessary help;² the manner in which peace was restored was a matter for the judgment of the magistrates. The action of central executive and local authority during periods of rioting appears, then, not as direction and control from above but as intelligent co-operation and delegation of power. So, too, a great deal depended on the personality and approach of the individual magistrate. In personality the magistrate was not lacking, but in approach he was becoming more and more limited; justices were becoming satisfied with the mere suppression of riot and were increasingly tending to neglect the discovery of the conditions which led to riot. Large scale disturbances were almost always indicative of a genuine grievance.³ Men who were as basically decent as the weavers of the South West or the keelmen of Tyneside did not riot for the sake of riot/

1 See Chapter V. Part II on "The Soldier".

2 On three occasions during the period (1715 at Warwick, 1740 at Stockton and 1753 at Leeds) the government failed to provide help. It then fell to the Justice to summon the Posse if the situation remained dangerous, and to the Sheriff, the executive officer, to arrange for its raising

See Chapter IV part II on "The Sheriff and the Posse Comitatus".

3 c.f. Lord Carteret in the House of Lords. February 10, 1737 Reported in the Gentleman's Magazine. Vol. VII pp 373-411

riot. Their uprisings were against starvation or oppression. Much of the suffering which lay at the bottom of riots was brought about in defiance of a mass of protective legislation passed by Parliament in Tudor and Stewart times, but this legislation was gradually ignored in the Eighteenth Century by the very people who should have enforced it, that is, the justices. There is, as far as is known, during these years one example only of a magistrate, - John Cooper of Trowbridge, - attempting to uncover the very roots of a riot. Cooper realised that the weavers of Wiltshire had real grievances and were in fact being victimised by the clothiers. He set out to quell the riot in as peaceable a way as possible, but this was only part of the duty he set himself. His real aim was to persuade the clothiers to mend their ways and to take away the causes of riot. Cooper failed, as he was bound to fail against so strong an opposition,¹ but his effort had been a reminder of the days of the paternal justice. Occasionally, other magistrates admitted, in their letters, that the rioters were/

1 See Chapter II on "Rioting in the Clothing Industry of the South West".

were fighting for what was right; John Hedworth, for example, knew well what the Sunderland keelmen were suffering in 171⁹~~8~~¹ - yet he made no attempt to remedy their wrongs, - and Hedworth was an honest and conscientious magistrate. One can only surmise the extent of damage done by less honest colleagues who used their position to support actively the growing tendency to oppress and victimise in industry; the allegations made against the Justice of Westbury Leigh by an anonymous person² are the only pieces of actual evidence in the State Papers Domestic to support such suspicions. The indifference to basic causes is, however, apparent even if not written in the letters of the magistrates of the time, and it was poetic justice that they should have to deal with risings which were partly the result of their own refusal to shoulder fully the duties of paternal administration.³

There was, during these years, no outstanding occasion in England when the central government was forced to punish justices for wilful failure to perform the duty of preserving the/

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- 1 John Hedworth concerning the Sunderland keelmen. June 23, 1719. S.P. Dom. 35/16.
 - 2 "Englishman" of Westbury to Harrington. February 28th, 1739 S.P. Dom. 36/47.
 - 3 Holdsworth op cit. pp 165-168.
Lord Bathurst quoted by The Gentleman's Magazine. Vol. VII p 411.

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the peace.¹ There were, however, in Scotland two notorious occasions (the Malt Tax Riots of 1725 and the Porteous Riots of 1736) when the actions of the magistrates of Glasgow and Edinburgh were regarded with extreme suspicion and subjected to a severe scrutiny by the government.

At Glasgow, rioting had ended on June 25, 1725. The first indication that the conduct of the magistrates was being criticised appears in a Glasgow Council Minute of July 7,² wherein the Corporation expressed strong resentment at an unfavourable account of their behaviour. This account, published in the Edinburgh paper, "The Caledonian Mercury" stated that the Glasgow magistrates had failed to help the military by refusing to read the Proclamation.³ The Corporation drew up their own account of their actions and sent this to the "Mercury" offices. It was not, however, printed, and the magistrates had to/

1 There was a certain amount of dissatisfaction with the conduct of magistrates in Lancashire and Yorkshire in the summer of 1715, but this was never of such proportions that large government enquiries became necessary

c.f. The Flying Post. 3660 June 21.

The Flying Post. 3663 June 28.

The St. James's Post. 70 July 6.

The Daily Courant 4273 July 5.

The Parliamentary Enquiry into the behaviour of the University and City of Oxford in 1716 and 1717 (See Chapter on Anti-military riots) revealed no negligence on the part of the Oxford magistrates in the least comparable with the behaviour of the Glasgow and Edinburgh magistrates. The magistrates of Lincoln incurred the displeasure of the Government in 1727 and were sent a fairly sharp note reminding them of their duties. See Chapter X Part I
A Collection of Smaller Riots

2 Glasgow Council Minute Book July 7, 1725.

3 The Caledonian Mercury 819 June 19, 1725.

to publish it privately in the form of a letter. The incident had caused the magistrates to think seriously of their position, and Provost Miller, who was attending a Convention at Edinburgh, was instructed to seek the help of the ablest lawyers of the east in the drawing up of a defence of the Glasgow City Fathers. The Provost, however, was already in need of defence before these instructions arrived, for he had been summoned to an interview with General Wade, in command of all forces in Scotland and Duncan Forbes, the Lord Advocate. At this interview it had been made clear to him that the Government had heard of the conduct of the Glasgow magistrates with anger and astonishment and that Wade and Forbes proposed to visit Glasgow shortly, accompanied by regiments of Foot and Artillery to take a pre-cognition of the whole affair.¹

Wade and Forbes left Edinburgh on July 6th and marched into Glasgow three days later, having first issued the following letter² to the magistrates of Glasgow to the press for publication:-

Gentlemen,/

1 Letter of Provost Miller to Bailies and Corporation of Glasgow. Glasgow City Archives.

2 Caledonian Mercury No. 824. Monday July 12th, 1725.

Gentlemen,

Their Excellencies, the Lords Justices, have been pleased to signify their high resentment of the late tumultuous and riotous proceedings of the inhabitants of your city, which have been intended with the circumstances of rapine and bloodshed to the dishonour of government and in contempt and defiance of the laws of the kingdom; and they are of opinion that all this might have been prevented if you had acted with vigilance and resolution becoming magistrates.

I am therefore commanded by their Excellencies to march a Body of His Majesty's Forces into the City of Glasgow in order to support the Civil Power in restoring the peace of the City; and being informed that several of the inhabitants have armed themselves and keep a guard in the town, you are hereby required to cause such arms to be lodged in some proper place or magazine to prevent any mischief that might otherwise happen between the Town's people and His Majesty's Forces.

Falkirk, 9th July, 1725.

George Wade.

In the following five days Wade and Forbes busied themselves investigating, talking to burgesses, and taking statements. They had little reward for their labours, for only twenty-one rioters (and these of no account) were apprehended. It had, however, become increasingly apparent to Forbes that his suspicions concerning the magistrates were justified, and before returning to Edinburgh on July 17th, he took the startling step of taking prisoner the Provost and Bailies. Bail was refused, and the prisoners were brought to Edinburgh and lodged in the Tolbooth on the 19th.¹ Their apprehension had really been a miscalculation, for it cemented their own supporters together and/

1 Caledonian Mercury. July 20, 1725.

and allowed them to appear as the victims of military government. On their journey to Edinburgh, they were escorted by a procession of the best people of Glasgow who saw to it that they were not exposed to Edinburgh ridicule. Furthermore, the lack of legal justification for their arrest became patent on the following day, when they were admitted to bail to appear at any time within the following six months. This amounted to acquittal.

The Lord Advocate had, indeed, overreached himself. He still believed, however, that the magistrates had acted disgracefully, and set forth his accusations in a Memoir.¹ He found that Provost Miller^c had erred in offering scattered billets to the regular troops without attempting to regain the town guard-house from the mob. Further, that he had made no attempt to read the Proclamation and had refused the offer of military help made on the night of July 24th by Captain Bushell. Again, that the Deacon Govenor, Bailie Mitchell, had made no attempt to quell the riot but had fled from the town; while the Dean of Guild had increased the muddle by insisting/

1 Culloden Papers pp 86-88.

insisting that the troops should be armed with sticks instead of with firearms. Finally, that the magistrates had made no attempt to discover the rioters. Between the day rioting broke out, June 25th, and the arrival of Wade and himself on July 9th, no rioter had been apprehended and no investigations had been carried out.

The magistrates of Glasgow made their defence in an Address to the King written on July 31st.¹ They professed their ardent loyalty for the Hanoverian cause, pointed to their behaviour during the 1715 Rebellion as proof, and claimed that the riots had been the work of the lower classes, and "abject sort of the populace". They expressed surprise and indignation that they had been imprisoned in their own jail, refused bail, and carried prisoner to Edinburgh. Further, "although the Corporation as a body cannot take upon us to justify their behaviour from errors in point of judgment which we may readily have fallen into when under the concern and anxiety that naturally arise from so unexpected an emergent, yet with regard to the sincerity of these of these/

1 Glasgow Council Minutes. July 31st, 1725.

our intentions and candour of our endeavour to settle and maintain the peace of the town..... we do most humbly submit ourselves to your Majesty's great wisdom". Concerning their actions, they pointed out that they had done what they could to prevent the destruction of Shawfields, but had been forced to flee by the violence of the mob, that their placing of the regular troops in scattered billets was based on a desire to avoid bloodshed if possible, and that Captain Bushell had lost his head and fired with no justification at the mob and without magisterial consent.

Charles Delafaye, secretary to the Lords Justices, replied to the Address of the Magistrates on August 5th, pointing out that there were considerable differences between their account and that sent up by the Lord Advocate.¹ To this the Magistrates replied that the account agreed with the examinations taken by Forbes in Glasgow when the magistrates had been allowed to be present; other examinations had been taken before General Wade, Colonel Spottiswood and Colonel Guest, but/

1 Glasgow Council Minutes. August 11th, 1725.

but the magistrates had not been present nor had they any idea of the information contained in the examinations nor even of the identity or character of the persons examined. Again, the Lord Advocate had had many casual conversations with citizens in taverns, and of information gleaned in this way, the magistrates were completely ignorant; they hoped, however, that the Lords Justices would notice, as a point in their favour, that the Glasgow maltsters had given security for all the stock they had since June 23rd, the date when the Malt Tax was to have been imposed and that the excise officers in Glasgow had complete freedom of access to the malt barns.¹

In this fashion the affair petered out. That the magistrates had failed to clear themselves before the country at large is made evident from the award of £6,080 sterling made to Campbell of Shawfields against the Corporation in March, 1726, by Parliament.² There was little doubt that despite the military help provided before the riot, the magistrates/

1 Glasgow Council Minutes. August 11th, 1725.

2 Journals of the House of Commons. Vol. XX 18th March, 1726.
Report of the Committee inquiring into the Petition of Daniel Campbell.

magistrates had acted stupidly and with little sense of initiative when faced with an emergency. It is easy to understand how they must have annoyed a man of vigour like Duncan Forbes.¹ At the same time Forbes had absolutely no right to arrest them as he did, and had no case in law.

The anger of the government at the failure of the Glasgow magistrates to control and suppress the Malt Tax rioters was as nothing compared with the wave of resentment which swept over governing circles in London when the spectacular murder of Captain Porteous of the Edinburgh Town Guard became known.² This feeling was due partly to a suspicion that Lord Provost Wilson had authorised Porteous to fire if need arose but had, after the riot, denied giving any such authorisation; secondly, that he had not only deserted Porteous but had, in his fear of the mob, shown an overgreat haste to try the unfortunate Captain on a charge of murder. Furthermore, as the facts of the second Porteous Riot became more widely known and discussed, people were appalled at the lack of foresight and the contempt of advice shown by the Lord Provost and his fellow magistrates in the days before the attack on the Tolbooth.

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1 Forbes was on this occasion praised by Walpole for his zeal. Culloden Papers. p. 96.

2 See Chapter VII Part I on The Porteous Riots at Edinburgh.

In fairness to Wilson it must be said that there was considerable confusion about the exact firing orders given to Porteous two days before the first riot (April 12, 1736). Wilson insisted, during his examination before the House of Lords, that, as Commander of the Town Guard, he had told Porteous that the City Treasurer had been instructed to furnish the Guard with powder and shot.¹ On the day of the execution of the smuggler Wilson, the Lord Provost had told Major Pool² of the Welsh Fusiliers that in case of disturbances the Town Guard had orders to fire with their small slugs at the legs of the rioters. It is not clear, however, whether this order was communicated to Porteous, who did not use the ammunition provided by the City Treasurer but himself purchased a more deadly type of shot at a shop in town and distributed this amongst his men. This was, to say the least, a highly irregular action. Since 1725 the Town Guard had used nothing but the lighter type of slug,³ and Porteous knew this well. Where Wilson would seem to have erred was in not making his orders sufficiently explicit.

The/

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- 1 Examination of Lord Provost Wilson. B.M. Add MS. 33049 f 27.
 - 2 Examination of Major Pool. B.M. Add MS. 33049. f. 88.
 - 3 Examination of Patrick Lindsay M.P. B.M. Add MS. 33049 f. 69.

The same inefficiency appears in the way in which he ignored the warnings brought him before the attack on the Tolbooth, and took no preventitive measures. In particular, Captain Lind of the Town Guard approached Wilson twice with news of the intended attack and yet received no special order for the defence of the prison,¹ while John Din, a Corporation employee, later asserted that he had told Wilson on the very morning of the murder that a woman at Dalmahoy Entry had decided to keep her son indoors for fear of the riot that was to take place that night and, - a new charge of inefficiency - that two days after the riot he had given the magistrates news of the whereabouts of some of the rioters but had been roughly told to depart as the magistrates had already had enough trouble over the affair.² The attempts made by the Edinburgh magistrates to prevent^t Din appearing as a witness against them before the House of Lords in April 1737 only lends further weight to these charges and leads ^{one} ~~me~~ to suspect that they were well founded.³ Neither Lind nor/

1 Examination of Captain Lind. M.B. Add. MS. 33049 f. 62.

2 A member of Edinburgh Corporation to Ld. Provost Wilson. April 26th, 1737. Edinburgh City Archives.

3 A member of the Edinburgh Corporation to Lord Provost)
Wilson. April 26th 1736..)
John Din to the Bailies and Corporation. April 24th)
1736.)

nor Din hesitated to broadcast their suspicions, and opinion in London not surprisingly swung violently against the magistrates. In February 1737, Carteret observed in the House of Lords that the Portecus murders^{er} must be well known to magistrates and citizens alike, and that the magistrates must have encouraged the rioters. In a Memorial found amongst the Newcastle Papers it was considered that "the Provost and majority of the magistrates wilfully and knowingly permitted the outrage to be committed in breach of their trust and in contempt of ^{his} the Majesty's authority." In particular, the following points were made: that so few of the rioters had been recognised despite the fact that there was a full moon, that the town guard was a mere third of its usual number, that the clergy had incited congregations to help in the riot, and that during the month between the riot on September 7th and the arrival of the Justice General in Edinburgh not a single rioter had been apprehended by a magistrate of the City.² With such suspicions rampant, it is not to be wondered at that Parliament decided to hold an enquiry into the/

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- 1 Earl of Morton to his son Lord Aberdour. Miscellany of the Maitland Club. February 10th 1737.
 - 2 Memorial, Newcastle Papers. B.M. Add. Ms. 33049 f 17.

the whole affair. Carteret in the House of Lords made the motion that the Provost and Magistrates should appear at the bar of the House of Lords on March 10th, 1737 together with Captain Lind, General Wade and any other necessary witnesses. The motion was carried unanimously.¹

From these Examinations the following facts emerged. Firstly, that while Porteous had been heavily punished for the part in the riot which took place at Wilson's execution, the members of the City Guard under his command had been allowed to go scot free. This combined with Provost Wilson's failure to explain clearly why these guards had not even been put to trial, conveyed the impression that Porteous had been from the beginning an object of particular victimisation. Secondly, that the Provost had received at least two warnings that a riot was threatening, and had done nothing. Wilson's only defence here was that he had intended strengthening the guard on September 8th when the riot was commonly supposed to take place, but had been taken by surprise when in actual fact it occurred on September 7th. Thirdly, that Wilson had/

1 Paltry. History. IX p. 1310.

had erred grievously in thinking that General Moyle at Abbeyhill would give military assistance without a written appeal from the magistrates, and had presumed upon the well-known character of his messenger, Patrick Lindsay, the Member of Parliament for Edinburgh.¹ Lastly, that Wilson had made little attempt to discover the identity of the rioters.⁺ Bailie Crocket, when examined,² confessed that he had stayed indoors throughout the whole of the rioting because it would have been dangerous for him to have appeared in the streets - a fatal admission-, while the more vigorous Bailie Colquhoun claimed³ that rumours of the intended riot were given belief only by the scum of the City, and that the magistrates had in fact attempted to read the Proclamation but had been prevented from so doing by the brute force of the mob.

The magistrates had not fared well on their own performance, and the evidence of Lind, Captain of the City Guard, and General's/

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- 1 Examination of the Lord Provost. B.M. Add. Ms. 33049 f. 27.
 - + Immediately after the riot, Wilson and his brother magistrates ordered all Masters of Incorporations to report on the whereabouts of their various servants and apprentices. Reports were still coming in in February 1737, but with no result, and this was the only investigation undertaken by the magistrates. See Exam. of P.Lindsay M.P. B.M. Add. Ms. 33049 f. 69.
 - 2 Examination of Bailie Crocket. B.M. Add. Ms. 33049 f. 46.
 - 3 Examination of Bailie Colquhoun. B.M. Add. Ms. 33049 f. 46.

Generals Moyle and Wade, given in the following week was yet more damaging. Lind not only repeated¹ what was common knowledge, that he had warned the Provost in good time of the threatened attacks, but also stated that he had suggested the removal of Porteous from the Tolbooth to the Castle, advice which had been rejected by the magistrates as impracticable and unnecessary. General Moyle² alleged that Wilson had acted in concert with the rioters "because it (the riot) was so much talked of and no care taken to prevent it". He instanced the case of a correspondent of the "Caledonian Mercury" called Ruddiman who had written a paragraph for insertion early in September to the effect that there was a strong body of troops always on duty in the Canongate waiting to enter the City should need arise. Ruddiman had been prevented from inserting the notice by a threat of imprisonment from the Lord Provost and the Lord Justice Clerk. More hostile criticism came from General Wade, who from the beginning had been most outspoken in his remarks concerning the magistrates. On November 4th, 1736, he had written to Newcastle as follows: "I do not find there was any enquiry made after them (the rioters)/

1 B.M. Add. Ms. Newcastle Papers. 33049. f. 62.

2 B.M. Add. Ms. Newcastle Papers. 33049. f. 80.

rioters) by the Magistrates who by the best information I have been able to procure not only permitted the Murder to be committed (which they might easily have prevented) but suffered all who were conscious of their guilt to make their escape".¹ Before the Lords, Wade ridiculed the magistrates' protestations that they had not believed the rumours of the intended riot, and exposed their folly in not sending to the Castle for help which could have arrived in a few minutes.²

The feeling of the House was made even more bitter when it was learned in London at the end of March that McLauchlan, the only rioter actually brought to trial, had been acquitted because of lack of witnesses.³ It seemed that Wade had been right when he had insisted to Newcastle that no jury in Scotland would convict anybody concerned in the murder of Porteous. On April 3rd the Provost was ordered into the custody of the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod and a bill was brought in entitled:- "To disable Alexander Wilson, Esq., from taking, holding, or enjoying any Office or Place of Magistracy in the City of Edinburgh, or elsewhere in Great Britain; and for imprisoning the said Alexander Wilson; and for abolishing the Guard kept up in the said City, commonly called/

1 State Papers Scotland (George II) Vol. XXII 58.

2 B.M. Add. Ms. 33049 f. 91.

called the Town Guard; and for taking away the gates of the Nether Bow Port of the said City, and keeping open the same". The motion was carried by 82 votes to 17.¹

It was undoubtedly the desire of the Lords to inflict a crushing punishment and in this very desire they overreached themselves. Had their punishment been confined to Wilson alone, there would have been no dissenting voice, for even Wilson's closest friends had realised that he had cut a sorry figure and had no defence. As early as April 8th, the Corporation of Edinburgh had intimated to him their intention of separating his case from theirs and leaving him to take care of himself.² Later on the Corporation even refused to pay Wilson's legal fees.³ He was, in fact, abandoned to his fate, while the Corporation prepared to defend itself against the indignities proposed in the Bill which had, by its vindictive and general character antagonised national pride and, incidentally, given the Corporation an easier case to defend. From the debates in both Houses/

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- 1 Provost Wilson to a member of the Corporation. 2 April, 1737. Edinburgh City Archives.
 - 2 Unsigned letter to Ld. Provost Wilson. April 8th, 1737. Edinburgh City Archives.
 - 3 Answers to the Memorial & Querie from the City of Edinburgh. 20th July, 1737. Edinburgh City Archives.

Houses, the evidence against the Corporation resolved itself as being of the flimsiest nature.¹ After bitter debate in which Duncan Forbes, the would-be chastiser of the magistrates of Glasgow, warned the Commons against the folly of acting in a spirit of national spite, the government indicated through Walpole its willingness to amend the provisions of the Bill so that the privileges of the Corporation should remain untouched. A modified Bill was brought in to disable Wilson from taking any future office or magistracy in Great Britain, and to impose a fine of £2,000 on the City for the benefit of Mrs. Porteous (who of her own accord later granted an abatement of £500).² Even this Bill³ was passed with great difficulty. Wilson, though abandoned by his fellows, had thus benefitted by the violence of the originally proposed punishments; he was received in triumph at Edinburgh on June 28.⁴

The magistrates of Glasgow and Edinburgh in 1723 and 1737/

1 Parlt. History X pp 238-247, 292-317.

2 Council Minutes (undated) Edinburgh City Archives.

3 10 George II c. 35.

4 Edinburgh Courant. June 28 and 30, 1737.

1737 showed a curious lack of intelligence at times of crisis and evinced no ability to restrain rioting even when military force was at hand. On the other hand, there was a noticeable savagery or lack of restraint about the Scottish mob in these years which made the task of magistrates more difficult in Scotland than in England. Patrick Lindsay, M.P. for Edinburgh summed up the qualities of the Scottish mob in the following words: "The lowest class of people in that country have generally speaking a turn to enthusiasm and so strong is the influence, such ^{is} the force of delusion that they can work themselves up to a firm persuasion and thorough belief that any mischief they are to do is not only lawful but laudable; that it is their duty to do it and from a religious principle to do it at any risk, even at the risk of their lives. Hence it is, Sir, that riots and disorders are less frequent in that country than here, and when riots do rise there they are more determined and consequently more dangerous."¹ This is of course a generalisa²tion, but it is the generalisation of a contemporary and is borne out by an examination of Scottish ^{history} rise. Scottish mobs showed less respect for human life than their English counterpart; this undoubtedly made the task of Scottish magistrates correspondingly more difficult.

1 Gentleman's Magazine Vol. VII p. 458. May 16, 1717.

II. THE CONSTABLE.

In the absence of any professional police body, the immediate representative of law and order in eighteenth century England was the Constable, by tradition "The Conservator of the Peace"¹ authorised to apprehend felons and minor offenders and to present the same before a magistrate, and empowered by the Riot Act to read the Proclamation for the dispersal of rioters. The odious nature of the office has been commented on widely.² It was a post which men did not wish to hold, and which they avoided if possible. Riots serve to illustrate some of the reasons for this unwillingness to serve.

In the first place, the constable could be exposed to considerable danger. In July 1720, a mob of Spittlefield weavers beat a Constable of Haxton so severely when he attempted to restrain them that he nearly died.³ John Gilbert, a Constable of the Tower Division, in April 1726 endeavoured to disperse a small mob and was cut down with a sword.⁴ Again, the Constable was unpaid, and might well lose financially through/

¹ Webb C. & S. The Parish and the County. pp. 26-27.

² Webb B. & S. op. cit. p. 62.
Holdsworth W.S. History of English Law. Vol. X. p. 153.
Thomson M.A. Constitutional History of England. pp. 456-7.

³ Evidence of Thomas Tyler v. Wm. Dirnally. S.P. Dom. 35/22.

⁴ Governor of the Tower to the Duke of Newcastle. May 9, 1726.
S.P. Dom. 35/62.

through the performance of his duty. The Petition¹ on behalf of the Constables of Warwick praying that they might be compensated for their expenditures (incurred while organising a Sheriff's posse to suppress rioters), serves as a reminder that local government was still a matter of personal and unpaid obligation as in the Middle Ages.² The offer^{ice} could be damaging in other ways, too. In 1727 a constable named Gerrard of Whitechapel, by trade a tallow chandler, obeyed Magistrates' orders and suppressed a meeting of "disaffected persons". The latter afterwards saw to it that by propaganda and threats they turned customers away from his shop and in fact ruined his business.³ Then too, there was the danger of being entangled in legal embarrassments. Thomas Brooks, a Constable of Shoreditch, was bitterly attacked by a demonstrative Hanoverian named Lister in June 1715 for failing to take action against a so-called Jacobite mob. What in fact had happened was that Lister had on two occasions aggravated the feelings of his neighbours by over-emphasising his Hanoverian allegiance. His neighbours retorted by mocking him and in a good-humoured/

¹ Petition to the King of the Magistrates of Warwick. November 29, 1715. S.P. Dom. 35/4.

² Holdsworth op. it. X. pp. 137-165.

³ A Memorandum for the Secretary of State for the North. S.P. Dom. 35/65.

good-humoured if somewhat boisterous manner hustled him off to the nearest public house to drink with them and to forget differences of opinion. Lister, however, did not treat the affair so lightly, and appealed firstly to two Headboroughs and secondly to Constable Brooks to deal with the alleged "rioters". The Headboroughs refused to intervene and so did Brooks. Brooks indeed thought that Lister was, through lack of common sense, magnifying the incident and refused to appear for such a petty cause. Lister thereupon indicted him at Hick's Hall for failure to do his duty.¹ Another sort of legal snare is illustrated by the case of High Constable Sharpless of Holborn who, with members of the watch, attended the election of a Lecturer for the Parish on October 23, 1728. During the course of the election a small disturbance broke out in which the mob beat a watchman. Sharpless seized the ring-leader of the mob, Thomas Randall, and carried him off to jail.² Randall's friends then brought an action against the High Constable for his part in the riot² and succeeded in making/

¹ Thomas Lister to the Secretary of State. S.P.Dom. 35/7. (undated). See also the case of a Constable of Faringdon Ward, Edward Siers, who arrested two Hanoverian demonstrators on October 20, 1715 (the King's Birthday) and was supported by a Jacobite mob when doing so. Siers was later taken to law for this act, taken in the first place because Siers believed the Hanoverians were provoking a riot. Flying Post 3768, February 28, 1716.

² The case of Mr. James Sharpless, High Constable of Holborn. S.P. Dom. 36/16.

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making his position so awkward that an appeal to the Government was considered necessary.¹ Finally, of course, constables must frequently have sympathised with the sentiments of rioters, especially during the larger disturbances. During the Walsall riots of 1750, the investigating King's Messenger, Carrington, found that he had to remove the local constables because of an inefficiency arising out of a complete sympathy with the rioters.²

It is not then surprising that those who could afford to do so bought their exemption from service as constable. The less fortunate ones might expect to perform their service with bad grace, performing the minimum of duty and wishing chiefly to be left alone. As far as rioting is concerned, indeed, the constables were ineffective and negligible as riot suppressors. In the State Papers Domestic relating to riots they are mentioned but rarely, and these few references tend to stress their weaknesses and inability to preserve order. In 1715, for example, Vice-Chancellor Sherlock of Cambridge referred as follows to a Constable of the Town: "He is bound over/

¹J. Ellis, Esq., J.P. to Charles Delafaye, Secretary to the Lords Justices. January 24, 1719. S.P. Dom. 36/16.

²Information of N. Carrington, King's Messenger, June 13, 1750. S.P. Dom. 36/113. Carrington found that even the new constables could not be trusted for the same reason. (Letter of June 29, 1750. S.P. Dom. 36/113).

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over for not doing his duty in dispersing them (the rioters); he said that they were too many for him to manage."¹ The mob in this case consisted of five students and street urchins. At Oxford in the same year a constable bravely attempted to control a mixed mob of town and gown and was not unexpectedly knocked down and trampled on.² During the Greenwich riots of 1722, the magistrates placed their constables at the church steeple door. They were of no use whatsoever, and were in fact ignored.³ At Lymington in 1725, constables had four rioters in custody but for want of assistance and the mob rising against them they were forced to let the offenders escape.⁴ From Peterborough during the 1740 Corn Riots came the report that "though great numbers of the said rioters are well known and we His Majesty's Justices have granted warrants to all and every the Constables and other Peace Officers within the said Liberty and taken all other proper and lawful methods to apprehend and bring the offenders to justice, yet their numbers were so great and the persons so desperate that not one of the said rioters could be apprehended".⁵ At Leeds in/

¹Sherlock & Townshend. June 16, 1715. S.P. Dom. 35/3.

²Unsigned letter to Mr. Mason at Wellingborough April 22, 1715. S.P. Dom. 35/4.

³Statement concerning the riot at Greenwich (undated) 1722.

⁴R. Smyth and J. Worsley to the Duke of Newcastle August 16, 1725. S.P. Dom. 35/58.

⁵Magistrates of Peterborough to the Duke of Montague June 18, 1740. S.P. Dom. 36/51.

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in 1753 a constable even dared to disobey the commands of the magistrates to take up position at a turnpike gate during a riotous period.¹

These examples have been quoted to illustrate the essential weakness of the Constable faced with riots. When constables performed creditably, it is noticeable that they were led by justices of strong character and supported by a military force. John Cooper, a magistrate of Trowbridge used a constable and a watch of thirty assistants^t successfully against the weavers in 1726. He was, however, an inspiring leader, and the constables were supported by a party of dragoons.² Similarly, the party of constables who arrested corn rioters at Stockton in 1740 and conveyed them to Durham were escorted by a military force and fared badly when the soldiers departed.³ In London individual constables were ^{as} ~~so~~ ineffective against mob actions as elsewhere, and the enquiries of the Justices of Middlesex into the keeping of the watch in 1720 revealed much corrupt practice. It was found/

1 Enclosed report in Lord Irwin's letter to Holderness. September 29, 1753. S.P. Dom. 36/123.

2 John Cooper to the Duke of Newcastle, November 28, 1726. S.P. Dom. 35/63.

3 Sheriff of Durham to the Bishop of Durham. June 15, 1720. S.P. Dom. 36/51.

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found that many constables did not perform their duty, that many citizens disregarded any obligations to serve or to pay compensation for not serving, and that there was little accounting for any such monies collected.¹ Nevertheless, in times of crisis and when organised by bold magistrates, the constables could on occasion provide an efficient force. Thus, in May 1715, the High Constable, Petty Constables, Beadles and Watchmen of the City of Westminster were specially organised by the magistrates of the City and prepared for the expected outbreaks of rioting on the King's Birthday on May 28th. To help to check the spread of disaffection, all constables were further ordered to arrest all street sellers of scurrilous pamphlets.² The success of this plan may be seen in the immunity of Westminster from riots at the end of the month. Similarly, the Constables of the London area were performed successfully during the Calico Riots of 1719. Under the leadership of strong/

1 Reports of magistrates Metcalfe and Ward. September 16, 1720. S.P. Dom. 35/23 of the Tower Division. Reports of the magistrates for the Divisions of Finsbury, St. Giles in the Fields and St. Paul's, Covent Garden. S.P. Dom. 35/23. In December 1720, all constables in the Middlesex County were ordered to fix white staves at least two feet long outside their houses with boards bearing their names to the end that future riots might be dealt with as quickly as possible. Order of Court, folio 5, December, 1720. Middlesex County Records. It may be noted that the constables of London proved of no avail during the Gin Riots of 1737. (See Chapter X Part I) It is possible that they had themselves an interest in the sale of spirituous liquors.

2 The Flying Post. 3645 May 17, 1715.

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strong characters such as John Bull and Isaac Shand, bodies of constables patrolled the affected areas of Spittlefields and Southwark while a party of constables and the watch of several divisions controlled London Bridge. As has already been seen,¹ the constables established a firm control over the rioters and were able to dispense them at ease.

At Bristol the constables were fortunate in that they were usually supported by a military force and led by men of outstanding ability and courage. Mayors like William Jefferies who in 1738 intended taking his posse of constables into the heart of the Kingswood mining area,² or John Clements, who in 1753 organised a fighting force of constables and citizens which not only defended Bristol but completely vanquished a mob of weavers and colliers,³ gave a valiant lead to the city watch. There was, too, a fund of courage amongst the leading citizens of Bristol which appeared in the actions of men like Fechem and Brickdale⁴ and of the Turnpike Trustees who, when threatened by mobs in 1749, immediately formed themselves into an Association for the Defence of the City.⁵

With/

1 See Chapter IV Part I on The Calico Riots.

2 See Chapter XI ~~Part I~~ on Kingswood: an area of riot.
Daily Post. November 7, 1738. 5978.

3 Felix Farley's Bristol Journal. May 26, 1753.

4 See Chapter VI Part II on the Coroner.

5 See Chapter V Part I on Turnpike Riots.

With such examples springing from the City Fathers it is perhaps not surprising that the Constables of Bristol performed their duties creditably in the riots of 1738, 1749 and 1753.

It would not do to leave the subject of the Constable without treating on an individual who attempted not only to perform his accepted duties efficiently but even sought to extend them. John Blackwell, a constable of the Ward of Cheap, stands out over these years as the model peace officer.¹ In May, 1715 he received news from his "spies" that/

1 Blackwell's record of public service was as follows:-

Cheap Ward	1714	Under Steward.
	1746-7	Representative of St. Pancras and Soper Lane; Inquest.
	1732	Petty Juror.
	1738	Grand Juror.
		(Cheap Ward Inquest Book; London Guildhall Library).
St. Pancras and Soper Lane Vestry		
	1714	Constable, Questman, and Scavenger.
	1718	Constable, Questman, and Scavenger.
	1725	Assessor of Poor Rate.
	1727	Member of Committee for the decoration of the Church Yard.
	1732	Assessor of the Poor Rate.
	1733	Member of Workhouse Committee.
	1746	Constable, Questman, and Scavenger.

In 1747 he removed from St. Pancras Parish and ceased to hold the office of Vestry Clerk which had been his for many years. (Minutes of All Vestries; London Guildhall Library).

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that a plot was afoot to raise three mobs at Cheapside, White chapel and Smithfield with the intent of massing together under the leadership of "persons of distinction" outside the Bank of England and storming the same. The plan was then for the mob to murder the City magistrates, and to send messengers into the Country proclaiming the Pret^ender. Blackwell felt that, such was the strength of Jacobite feeling at the time that he could not trust the watch or trained bands and hired twenty men of his own choosing, supplying them with arms at his own expense. With this handpicked force he did in fact rout a Cheapside mob, seizing twenty-eight rioters and, so he claimed, thus nipped the whole plot in the bud, for the two other mobs were frightened by his dispersal of their Cheapside companies, and dispersed forthwith.¹ On November 17, 1715 Blackwell received news of a mob attacking an alehouse with the intent of beating those shopkeepers hiding within. Blackwell hired his own force, distributed firearms and quickly dispersed the rioters.² He performed a similar service for one Arrowsmith who was being attacked in a tavern in Fleet Street and saw to it that Arrowsmith was properly cared for by a doctor.³

From an Abstract of expenses it appears that Blackwell not only formed his own force but even undertook prosecutions against malefactors apprehended.⁴ To the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury he submitted the following list of his expenses

1 Flying Post. June 4, 1715.

2 Testimony of Richard Makmorran, John Young, Joshua Gee.

3 Testimony of Thomas Arrowsmith. August 9, 1716. S.P. Dom. 35/6
S.P. Dom. 35/6

4 John Blackwell's Abstract of Expenses. S.P. Dom. 35/6.

BILL OF CHARGES DUE TO JOHN BLACKWELL,
CONSTABLE IN THE WARD OF CHEAP, LONDON

	£	S	D
Paid 12 men to assist in the suppressing the riots on the 28th & 29th May 1715	3	0	0
Paid for summoning them together		5	0
Expenses upon them there two nights	1	5	0
Per secret intelligence of the design of the Mob in General for the 29th May	1	1	6
Paid damages to a Constable and 5 Watchmen	5	0	0
Paid summoning witnesses to attend the Right Hobl. Sir Wm. Humphries Bart. Lord Mayor and loss of time to several witnesses	1	5	0
Ditto before my lord at Sir Charles Peers	1	5	0
Ditte before Sir Charles Peers.		15	0
Expenses upon them on those occasions	1	2	0
To provide 100 men to go to Westminster to prevent riots at the Parliament House £6. 9. 6. Recd. of Capt. Bell £5 due more	1	9	6
	<hr/>		
	£ 16	8	0

		£	s	D
		16	8	0
King v. Stringer Harvey,) Rye, Tho. Harvey,) Owen Tyler indicted) for Riots 29th May)	Expenses on the Wit- nesses at those Trials the 14th & 15th July 1715 at the Old Bailey and the loss of time to several	2	11	0
King v. Parker etc.) Bethell indicted) for Riots in) London 28th & 29th) May 1715)	For serving 7 Wit- nesses with subpoenas at these two trials on 8th Sept. 1715 at the Old Bailey	17	6	
	Paid with subpoenas		7	0
	Spent on witnesses to keep them together and for loss of time to several	1	7	3½
	By order of my Lord Mayor to prevent of making of a bonfire and riots 29th Sep- tember 1715	2	6	6
		<hr/> <hr/> £ 23 17 3½ <hr/> <hr/>		

To the Right Honble. the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury to the Right Honble. the Lord Viscount Townshend, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State.

We the underwritten do recommend the payment of this Bill being well satisfied it hath been expended for His Majesty's service and do further recommend that the said John Blackwell may have as a reward the sum of Fifty Guineas for his extraordinary zeal and service to His Majesty both in these and divers other public instances of his endeavour to preserve the peace of this City and suppress the disturbances thereof.

Wm. Humphries. Signed 7th
Charles Peers November 1715.

According to his own estimate, Blackwell thought the government owed him £187. 6. 9½. This included the fifty guineas recommended by the two Lord Mayors Humphries and Peers as a fitting testimonial, ten pounds for the formation of an Association to fight the Pretender and £24. 3. 0 for his defence of himself in a lawsuit with a rioter who claimed he had been struck by Blackwell. Even allowing for a lack of modesty of statement Blackwell does seem to have been a truly remarkable character possessed of great courage and perseverance. He sought out information concerning possible riots, hired and equipped his own armed force, took care of people hurt in riots, and prosecuted rioters. In the extent of his activities and his natural desire to receive payment he was a pointer to the eventual and inevitable professional police body.

Blackwell was, however, an exception. Generally speaking during this period the constable was too frail a figure to be of use during riots, especially large-scale disturbances; he was of little import in the machinery for the preservation and restoration of public order - a machinery in which the vital parts were played by the magistrate and the soldier.

III. THE TOWN GUARD OF EDINBURGH.

In 1513, following the defeat at Flodden, the magistrates of Edinburgh ordered all male inhabitants to be in arms and readiness to repel the English and specially selected a band of twenty four likely looking men as a standing watch.¹ This was the origin of the City Guard, though the body was not officially constituted until 1648, when the Town Council appointed a body of sixty men to be raised. The Captain was to have the monthly pay of £11: 2: 3d sterling, two Lieutenants of £2 each, two sergeants of £1: 5/-, three corporals of £1 and the private men 15/- each per month. As no regular fund was provided to defray the expenses of the body it soon ceased to exist and in 1679 the Privy Council informed the magistrates that if they did not provide an efficient guard to preserve order in the city, the regular troops of the Scottish army would be quartered in it. As a result of this threat, forty armed men were raised in 1679, and following a serious riot in 1682, the number was increased to one hundred and eight. In 1685 the captain of the Guard was empowered to import 300 ells of scarlet coloured cloth for the making of suitable uniforms, and the members of the Guard soon became/

¹ Grant.J.. Old and New Edinburgh. Vol. I pp. 135-7.

became a familiar sight in the High Street patrolling with muskets in the daytime, and at night with Lochaber axes. The Guard was finished early in the Seventeenth Century with a Guard-house, a long low ugly building in the middle of the High Street and between the Black Turnpike and the Tron Kirk. It contained a room for the Captain on duty, a room for special prisoners, a common hall and a small apartment for the city sweeps. Under the Captain's room was the coal-hole in which coal and obstreperous drunkards were kept.

In theory at least Edinburgh was, in the first half of the Eighteenth Century, possessed of a "police" force which could nowhere else in the British Isles be rivalled. The members of the Guard were paid a definite sum for their services, they had a uniform and a well-established organisation to give them the backing of traditional authority, and they had the common origin of the Highlands and the Scots Brigades in Holland. In practice, their efficiency as a peace-preserving body was subject for debate. After the Porteous Riots, for example, an Account of the behaviour of the Guard in previous Edinburgh riots was drawn up for the Duke of Newcastle. It was found that in 1701 the Darien Mob had, without the least interference from the Guard, burnt down the door of the Tolbooth and rescued prisoners. In 1705 the Edinburgh/

Edinburgh mob completely terrorised the Privy Council and conducted a murderous attack on the Lord Chancellor. This took place within a few yards of the Guard House, yet the Guard looked on and dared not interfere. Two years later, during the sitting of the Union Parliament, the mob ran riot in the High Street for days on end and actually attacked Parliament House without a step being taken to repress them. Finally, according to the Account, there was a scuffle in 1734 when the Deacon Convener was held high in the air above the mob until he agreed to give bail to two apprentices taken prisoner: the Guard looked on and did nothing.¹

This unfavourable Account is perhaps subscribed to by the Act of the Edinburgh Burgh Council in August 1737 which established a new scheme for the suppression of riots. At the first appearance of a mob or tumult, without waiting for any alarm signal, the Magistrates and Merchant Company were to assemble at the Council Chamber, the Deacon Convener and the other thirteen Deacons of Crafts at the Borough Room, the Societies of Captains, Lieutenants and Ensigns at the Council House, and the Society of Firemasters at the Sheriff Court, Parliament/

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An account of the Behaviour of the Edinburgh City Guard.
Newcastle Papers. B.M. Add. Mss. 33049 f. 21.

Parliament Court, Parliament House. This additional scheme¹ would seem to reveal no great confidence in the Guard.

Again, it is true that on the night Porteous was murdered, the Guard was not only of no avail but was not even on parade as in duty bound; only fifteen men attended at the Guard House, and these without powder or shot.²

On the other hand, Patrick Lindsay, Member of Parliament for Edinburgh at the time of the Porteous Riots, gave evidence in the House of Lords describing the behaviour of the Guard in a riot in 1725. Rieters had roamed the Edinburgh streets for two days and had clashed frequently with the Guard. Many men were seriously injured on both sides, but eventually the Guard gained the upper hand and dispersed the mob. Lindsay certainly did not give the impression that the Guard was an inefficient body.³ Again, the poet Robert Fergusson in his verses championed the High Street mob against the "black banditti" of the Guard; had the Guard performed no disciplinary function, Fergusson could hardly have written thus

¹ Act of the Town Council August 3, 1737. Edinburgh City Archives.

² See Caledonian Mercury. 2565 September 9, 1736.

³ Examination of Patrick Lindsay M.P. B.M. Add. Mss. 33049 f. 69.

¹ thus. In 1737, too, at a riot in the Old Kirk, Provost Osborne was forced to summon a detachment of the guard to restore order, which was done immediately.² Finally it may be observed that in the first of the two Porteous Riots the behaviour of the Guard was not open to censure on grounds of cowardice or ill-discipline.³

The truth was, perhaps, that the Guard was efficient except when caught unawares. When organised ^{and} a capable force, it had difficulty in assembling and exerting itself when surprised by sudden outbreaks of rioting. It was nevertheless, despite its deficiencies, the nearest approach at this time to a regular police body.

¹ See "The Daft Days" and "The King's Birthday in Edinburgh".

² Caledonian Mercury 2719. September 5, 1737.

³ See Chapter VII Part I on The Porteous Riots.

IV. THE SHERIFF AND THE POSSE COMITATUS.

At the beginning of the Eighteenth Century the defenders of internal peace against rioters were firstly the Justices of the Peace and the other Peace Officers and secondly, in more serious cases, the Army. It did happen, however, on occasions, that the needs of the County were already so great that armed help could not be sent to magistrates finding the situation beyond their control, and in such cases there was a last and somewhat desperate expedient for the restoration of peace, that of raising the posse comitatus. It has been suggested by the Webbs (p. 488 "The Manor and the County") that this expedient was not resorted to seriously after 1695. This in actual fact is not so. While the raising of the posse was admittedly rare in the Eighteenth Century, there are at least two examples of an actual raising taking place and other examples of a raising being suggested. A posse dealt with the West Bromwich riots of 1715¹ and also with the Durham Riots of 1740.² The posse was suggested by a magistrate during the Flint/

¹ Northey's opinion concerning the Petition of the Sheriff of Warwick. November 29, 1715. S.P. Dom 35/4

² See Chapter I on "Corn Rioting".

Flint Riots of 1740¹, and again by the government itself in 1753 when the magistrates of Leeds showed little initiative in thinking only of military help as the restorer of peace in their town, though the government was at that time unable to supply troops.²

It is during the raising of the posse that the Sheriff emerges from the limbo to which the rise of the Justices of the Peace had gradually condemned him,³ for it is the Sheriff who issues orders for the raising of the posse and takes command of the assembled body. The historian is fortunate in possessing a fully documented story of the raising of the Durham Posse and is thus better enabled to assess the merits, the difficulties and the deficiencies of what was an ancient device used in comparatively modern times.

In the summer of 1740 the Government was sorely tried with a widespread outbreak of rioting caused by food shortage,⁴ and found it impossible to police all the affected areas with troops. At Stockton in June the rioters were proving/

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- ¹ David Foulkes, J.P. to Sir George Wynne Bart. May 25, 1740. S.P.Dom 36/50.
- ² Holderness to Mayor Leeds. October 13, 1753. S.P.Dom 36/123
- ³ Webb, B. & S. "The Manor & the County". pp. 485, 487, 375-7.
- ⁴ See Chapter I on "Corn Rioting".

proving too much for the handful of soldiers quartered there, and two Durham magistrates decided to order the Sheriff of the County, Sir William Williamson, "to issue precepts to the chief constables to command all persons from fifteen to sixty to attend at Sedgefield on Friday next between the hours¹ of five and seven in the morning in order to march to Stockton". Williamson, who was a sick man and of rather a timid disposition, had grave misgivings about the wisdom of the order and rode over from his home at Monkwearmouth to Durham to argue with Vane and Davison, the magistrates. Williamson saw only two possible outcomes of the rising of the posse; bloodshed or farcical humiliation. Either a pitched battle would result, or so few supporters of the posse would assemble that the magistrates and sheriff would appear ridiculous and the rioters would be encouraged to further actions. Furthermore, he himself had to meet all the expenses of the posse (which would, of course, have been made good to him at the annual "Sheriff's Cravings"²), and he could not afford to finance more than one posse. Vane and Davison, together with Hedworth and Bowes, two/

¹ Sir W. Williamson to the Bishop of Durham. June 1740.
S.P.Dom 36/51.

² Webb B & S. "The Manor and the County". p. 305.
Holdsworth, W.S. History of English Law, Vol. X p. 153.

two other magistrates for the County, were quite determined that the Posse should be raised and Williamson, who was as Sheriff merely their executive servant, was bound eventually to carry out their instructions. He still denied, however, that the responsibility of giving an order to fire, if the need should arise, was his. The magistrates insisted that their authority ended with the giving of the order to raise the posse and that the Sheriff assumed complete leadership of and responsibility for the posse in action. On this point Williamson took the advice of his lawyer friends Gowland, Johnson and Rudd at Durham, and was advised by all three against assuming sole responsibility. An agreement was eventually reached by the adoption of Williamson's suggestion that he would assume responsibility if the Magistrates signed a document authorising him to give any necessary firing orders.

At 5 a.m. on Friday, June 13, Williamson set out for the rendezvous at Sedgfield taking with him in his coach an under-sheriff to give out orders as he himself was so weak as to be almost inaudible. Very few country-folk joined him on the way to Sedgfield but as he arrived at the outskirts of the town, he heard the sounding of a horn and was greeted by a jeering mob. The magistrates Hedworth and Bowes arrived soon afterwards, and Williamson attempted to speak to the posse, /

posse, then about two hundred strong and very obviously low in spirit. Together with Hedworth and Vane, who had just arrived, he sought to explain the fundamental importance of maintaining peace and safe-guarding life and property. At last the posse set out for Stockton, increasing slightly in numbers on the way. Vane, Hedworth, and an under-sheriff went on ahead into the town to see whether the posse would be allowed free entry. The way lay open and the posse moved forward to an inn in the centre of the town where the small party of soldiers was already drawn up. The officer in charge put himself at the disposal of the magistrates and declared his willingness to fire if so required. Under the joint protection of posse and military, the magistrates were enabled to apprehend seven rioters and to supervise the loading of 1,200 bushels of wheat on board ship for export.

At 4.30 p.m. Williamson organised his body for the return journey to Durham. The cart containing the prisoners went first under an escort of twenty soldiers, followed by Williamson's coach and a posse of 500. The soldiers soon returned to Stockton and the numbers of the posse began to decrease. To avoid trouble at Sedgfield, where the whole population lined the streets, Williamson went through at a trot, /

trot, but no attempt was made to rescue the prisoners. By the time the posse had got within four miles of Durham its numbers had dwindled to twenty and in order to avoid trouble in the outskirts of the city, Williamson ordered the posse and prisoners to enter at least quarter of a mile behind his coach. He himself got through without incident, but a fierce struggle developed around the prisoners' cart and two were rescued.¹

It was a most unhappy Sheriff who described the day's events in a letter to the Bishop of Durham.² Williamson estimated that not one man in twenty had obeyed the summons to attend and that those who had attended had shown no willingness to serve and no sense of discipline. The whole affair had exposed the county authorities to ridicule and a second attempt at raising the posse would probably be completely disregarded. Williamson was, of course, an introspective and over-sensitive individual. He saw only too clearly the emptiness of his own office and power, and tended perhaps, to exaggerate the futility of his efforts, for the appearance of the posse at Stockton certainly settled the situation there.

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¹ Hedworth to the Duke of Newcastle. June 13th, 1740.
S.P.Dom 36/51.

² Sir W. Williamson to the Bishop of Durham. June 15th, 1740.
S.P.Dom 36/51.

It is, nevertheless, impossible not to share Williamson's pessimistic opinion concerning the efficacy of the posse as a riot suppressing body, and what is really surprising is that Williamson had received such support as he did. The magistrates of Flint had decided in the same year not to raise the posse because, they argued shrewdly,¹ so great was local sympathy for the aims of the rioters that a summons to assemble would have been ignored. It was indeed true that the posse was of little use at a time such as the early Eighteenth Century when rioting was generally not wanton action but an expression of widespread suffering supported by popular sympathy.

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David Foulkes, J. P. to Sir George Wynne Bart. May 25, 1740.
S.P.Dom 36/50.

V. THE SOLDIER.

The Soldier's legal position, when suppressing a riot was explained clearly by Attorney General Northey in 1717 when he was asked for his advice on the occasion of a request to the government for military help by the magistrates of Tiverton. According to Northey, "by the Common Law all his Majesty's subjects (among whom the soldiery are included) are to be assisting to the Civil Magistrates or their command in suppressing riots, tumults and insurrections and may, if necessary, for the apprehending of such offenders, use their arms". Moreover, Northey continued, the soldier's position had been clarified by the recent Riot Act which provided that "if the persons unlawfully rioting or twelve or more of them after proclamation made as is directed by the said Act shall continue together and not disperse themselves within One Hour, that then it shall and may be lawful for the Civil officers therein mentioned where such assembly shall be to send for such other persons as shall be commanded to be assistant unto them to seize and apprehend such rioters so continuing together and it is thereby declared that if any of the persons so unlawfully, riotously and tumultuously assemble/

assemble shall happen to be killed, maimed, or hurt... by reason of their resisting the officers and those in aid of them shall be free, discharged and indemnified".¹

The soldier was thus defended by Common Law and by the provisions of the recent Riot Act; his position would seem to be perfectly straight-forward. Nevertheless, the events of the next forty years were to create nothing but muddle and obscurity. The opinion became more and more widespread that a soldier faced with rioting could act only in the presence and under the command of a magistrate. The Common Law duties of the soldier qua citizen were overlooked: an officer attempting to suppress riot on his own authority did so at considerable personal risk, and would be acting in a most rash manner were he to give an order to fire without the reading of the Proclamation previously by a magistrate. Very naturally the result of such a legal muddle was that officers acted strictly in accordance with written orders and delayed their intervention until such specific, written, or personally given orders had been received from a magistrate. This confusion eventually resulted, too, in the tragedy of the Gordon Riots 1780, when a London mob which could have been suppressed immediately/

¹ Attorney-General Northey to Townshend. October 26, 1717.
S.P.Dom 35/10.

immediately by brisk military action was allowed to pillage¹ the city for three days.

The first step into this fatal state of legal muddle is apparent after the Malt Riots at Glasgow in 1725. Two Companies of Foot had been marched into the city from Stirling under the command of a Captain Bushell, but were prevented from taking up quarters at the Guard House by the mob and were, on the following day forced to retreat and take refuge at Dumbarton. In self-defence the soldiers fired several times as they marched out of the city, and thus killed members of the pursuing mob. Bushell was held responsible for giving the order to fire - though he had acted in defence of his own life and the lives of his men - and together with his under-officers was charged with the murder of the dead rioters.² The affair appears even more ridiculous when it is remembered that the case against Bushell was presented by the King's Solicitor in Scotland though the Lords Justices of Regency were completely in sympathy with Bushell. The verdict of guilty was a foregone conclusion with a local Scottish jury, and Bushell was eventually saved by the issuing/

¹ Holdsworth W.S. History of the English Law. Vol. X p. 706. de Castro: The Gordon Riots.

² Secretary of Lords Justices to Duke of Newcastle. December 1, 1725. S.P.Dom 36/60.

issuing of a Pardon from the Lords Justices on December 31, 1725. No soldier in the future could feel completely happy in the knowledge that even the necessary measures of self-defence might render him open to a charge of ^{murder}. This state of doubt was intensified by further incidents in Scotland in 1728, when, on November 15, Thomas Morrice, a corporal of Lord Londonderry's Regiment quartered at Aberdeen was commanded to take eight men to the aid of the Excise Officers and to make a seizure of eight horse-loads of tobacco about half a mile outside the city. A mob attempted to free the seizure and set about the small party of soldiers in a furious fashion with stones and sticks. At the end of a prolonged scuffle, Morrice was hurled to the ground and his men in desperation fired at their ^{assailants} assistants, thereby killing a rioter.¹ Morrice was taken up on a charge of murder, as was, shortly afterwards, a soldier named Pickars at Edinburgh for killing a rioter in similar circumstances. The Commissioners of Excise who had requested the aid of the military on both occasion pointed out to their colleagues at London that/

¹ George Harris to Commissioners of Excise. January 24, 1728.
S.P.Dom 36/5.

that it was absolutely essential that a soldier thus charged with murder should be released without trial and pardoned. "If soldiers, when attacked by a mob and most barbarously beat and abused must upon firing in their own defence be imprisoned and run the risk of being hanged - and it is too well known that the juries here will very readily contribute all in their power towards it - it is not to be expected that our offices^r will have any assistance from them".¹ This fear was indeed justified, and the military became increasingly averse to interfering in riots without written commands or without magistrates present. Another result was that soldiers were exposed to mob violence without adequate means of self-defence. Thus in 1729 the soldiers guarding Fechan's house in Bristol were not allowed to use fire-arms. The mob with impunity flung large stones at them, broke several heads and eventually forced them to flee.² Similarly at Henley in 1743 soldiers were set upon by a mob of townspeople and forced to take flight; their commanding officer remarked that the mob knew that the military dared not use their fire-arms and that it was a pity that soldiers could not be provided with sticks.³

The/

¹ Commissioners of Excise at Edinburgh to Commissioners of Excise at London. February 16, 1728. S.P.Dom. 36/3.

² Yorke's statement on Fechem's case. December 20, 1729. S.P.Dom. 36/16.

³ Lieut-Col. Fitzwilliam to Col. Fleming, June 4, 1743. S.P.Dom. 36/1.

The conduct of the military during the Second Porteous Riot 1736 clearly foreshadows the tragedy of the Gordon Riots. Whilst rioting was taking place in the city of Edinburgh, strong armed forces were stationed a few hundred yards away at the Castle and in the Burgh of Canongate. The officer in charge of the forces at the Castle, Major Robertson, could hear the rioters at work and could actually see the fire which destroyed the door of the Tolbooth Prison from his post at the Lower Gate of the Castle. He would not, however, move an inch without application from the ¹Magistrates of the city - an application which never arrived. The troops in the Canongate were under the command of General Moyle, who was requested to intervene by the Member of Parliament for Edinburgh, Lindsay. Lindsay, however, was not a magistrate and Moyle refused to order his troops to storm the Netherbow Gate and to suppress the riot unless he received written orders from the magistrates of the City or was approached personally by one of them.² Moyle's conduct was based on instructions contained in a letter written to him two years previously by General/

¹ Examination of General Wade. B.M. Add MS. 33049 f. 91.

² Examination of General Moyle. B.M. Add. MS. 33049 f. 80.

General Wade, who advised that "if any parties are demanded of you, to assist the civil magistrates (unless it be to assist the officers of His Majesty's Revenue or to appease some sudden tumult where bloodshed or mischief must be immediately prevented) you take it under the hand of the Lord of the Session or the Judge or the Chief Magistrate (who requires your assistance) by letter or otherwise specifying the reasons of such demand, and that the same cannot be put into execution but by the assistance of the military. This will make them more cautious in demanding or desiring the assistance of the Forces, and be a security both to you and the officers who command such parties, for being answerable for the consequences".¹ Moyle had obviously considered the Porteous Riot to be without the description of "some sudden tumult where blood-shed or mischief must be immediately presented".

General Wade explained his attitude at greater length in his Examination before the House of Lords, 1737. He made the claim that military officers were under no necessity to intervene in any riot, save for the service of the Revenue, unless expressly ordered to do so by a magistrate; the orders should be in writing, or the magistrate should be present in person. As/

¹

General Wade to General Moyle. B.M. Add. MS. 35875 f. 290.

As an example of the plight into which an officer could fall if these conditions were not satisfied, Wade instanced the Dundee Food Riot of 1720. The magistrates at Dundee had approached the commanding officer at Dundee and given him verbal authority to fire on the mob. This he was forced to do, but without a magistrate being present. On the following day the magistrates came to the officer and told him he had caused a great deal of bloodshed, and hoped that he would be able to answer for the mischief he had done; they were only prevented from bringing in a charge of murder against the officer by the intervention of Brigadier Preston. Wade went on to remark that "he was not insensible that every subject in Great Britain whether an officer, soldier or of any other denomination, is personally obliged to assist the civil magistrate when he requires him so to do, but I never could be prevailed upon to be of opinion that it is in the power of a civil magistrate (in which number a constable may be included) to order an officer to assemble a party of men on parade".¹ This statement is, in its muddled contradictions, a fair indication of obscure relations between civil and military powers at the middle of the century. While admitting/

¹ Examination of General Wade. B.M. Add. MS. 33029 f. 91.

admitting the Common Law obligation of the soldier, Wade states that no soldier will intervene unless expressly and explicitly ordered to do so by a magistrate: while admitting that an officer was bound to help the magistrate when directly ordered to do so, Wade raises a puzzling quibble about the extent of the magistrate's power. The fundamental point - and one which Wade would not have cared to state before the Lords - was that the military were being forced, by the legal dangers incurred when suppressing riots, to deny any Common Law obligation. That this was so appears from the Leeds Rioting of 1753, when officers refused to allow their men to guard turnpikes except in the presence of peace officers, pleading that such a duty was not included in their written instructions from the Secretary-at-War. The magistrates of Leeds sought assistance from Holderness, Secretary of State, but were told that the soldiers could not be blamed for their refusal to co-operate. "Though an officer (as a subject) may possibly be within the description of your Lordship's letter (i.e. the right of the Magistrates to command all the King's subjects to quell riots) yet as a military man he would probably think himself bound strictly to his orders and instructions".¹

This/

¹ Lord Irwin to Holderness. September 29, 1753. S.P.Dom.36/123.
Holderness to Lord Irwin. October 13, 1753. S.P.Dom.36/123.

This deadlock can very largely be ascribed to the failure of the Riot Act to define adequately the duty and position of soldiers in time of riot. By Common Law the soldier's duty was clear; the Riot Act merely encouraged the misconception that the military could act only in the presence of magistrates, a misconception which grew steadily stronger and which eventually resulted in the barbarities of the Wilkes and Gordon Riots.

VI. THE CORONER.

On several occasions during the period 1714-54 the attention of the Secretaries of State was drawn to decisions of Coroner's Juries whereby suppressors of riots who had unfortunately killed rioters were found guilty of murder.

In 1715 Samuel Lowe of West Bromwich and Thomas Abbis, a Dudley man, were found guilty of the murder of rioters at West Bromwich though they had been acting at the time under the command of a Sheriff. Lowe, in particular, realised that he was in a most precarious position; at the Coroner's Inquest he had found that the foreman of the jury was one Turton, a notorious supporter of the mob, and that the jury contained several actual rioters. The verdict had very naturally gone against him, and there was a grave possibility of the same thing happening at the Staffordshire Assizes to which he had been committed for trial. He therefore appealed¹ to the King for an immediate Pardon, and his case was considered by the Attorney and Solicitor General, who recommended that the Indictment against Lowe and Abbis be removed by a writ of Certiorari/

¹ Extract of a letter from West Bromwich. August 4, 1715.
S.P.Dom 35/4.

^t
Ceriorari to the King's Bench and that the Coroner should
submit a full account of his findings.¹

In 1722 the magistrates of Middlesex and Westminster petitioned the King on behalf of the constables who were executing a warrant for searching gaming houses when a mob rose to oppose them. During the ensuing skirmish the constables killed a man, whereupon the rioters indicted some of the constables before a coroner's inquest on a charge of murder. The magistrates therefore begged that the constables might be defended at the expense of the Crown.²

On September 27, 1729 a drugget-maker Stephen Fechem of Bristol was attacked at his home by a mob of four hundred enraged weavers. The mob quickly pushed back a small guard of soldiers sent earlier on by the magistrates and, having ransacked the cellars of the house, were actually breaking through the front door when Fechem and a few servants, realizing their lives were in danger, fired upon the mob. Further violence was prevented by the arrival of the magistrates and a band of soldiers, but rioters had already been killed or mortally wounded. Some died within the City boundary and the Coroner's

¹
Northey and Lechmare to the King. August 13, 1715.
S.P.Dom. 35/4.

²
Petition of the Magistrates for the County of Middlesex and for the City and Liberty of Westminster. 1722.
S.P.Dom. 35/34.

Coroner's Inquest found that Fechem had acted in defence of his life. The other Inquests were, however, carried out at Gloucester and, after three days' consideration, Fechem was found guilty of manslaughter and committed to stand trial at the following Assizes at Gloucester.¹ Fechem realised that he stood little chance of acquittal with a Gloucester Jury and went into immediate hiding. At the same time he appealed to the King for protection,² and his Petition was considered by Attorney General Yorke on December 20, 1729. Yorke considered that Fechem had indeed acted in his own defence and that an immediate pardon should be issued to him and to any other person involved in the suppressing of the riot, "to the end that His Majesty's Royal Resolution to protect his subjects in their just defence against such illegal and tumultuous practices may the more strongly appear."³ Despite this Pardon, the Coroner of the County of Gloucester still attempted to have Fechem apprehended, and announced his intention of indicting the officers of the out-parish for failing to apprehend him.⁴

The/

¹ Read's Weekly Journal, October 11, 1729. Gloucester Journal
Fog's Weekly Journal, September 13, 1729. 51. October 7, 1729.
The Craftsman, October 4, 1729. 170.
² Petition of Stephen Fechem. S.P.Dom 36/16.
³ Yorke's Report to Newcastle. December 20, 1729. S.P.Dom 36/16.
⁴ Stephen Fechem to Henry Fane. January 12, 1729. S.P. Dom 36/17.

The same persistence is noticeable in the behaviour of the Gloucester coroner in 1753, when a prominent Bristol citizen John Brickdale was found guilty of the murder of a rioter William Fudge during the May Riots, 1753, despite the evidence of several witnesses that Brickdale was nowhere near the scuffle in which Fudge was killed. Brickdale appealed to the King, and Attorney General Ryden advised, at the beginning of June, the issuing of a pardon and the removal of the case to the Court of the King's Bench, the quashing of the charge there, and the issuing of a writ of ^{Nolle} Prosequi.¹ When this decision became known at Gloucester the same Coroner held a second Inquest which without demur found Brickdale not guilty. A second Coroner, however, Edward Webb - "a man of a very bad character" - decided to take a third Inquest among the rioters and returned a verdict of murder against Brickdale and a Bristol business man named Chivers. This third verdict had to be quashed by removal to the King's Bench and a second general Pardon settled the matter in November, 1753.²

There was no doubt that the Coroner, if so minded, could be a force to be reckoned with, especially if sympathetic to the rioters/

¹ Ryden to Newcastle. June 2, 1753. S.P.Dom 36/122.

² John Brickdale to Newcastle. S.P.Dom 36/124.

rioters as Webb of Gloucester was undoubtedly to the Kingswood Colliers. The ^oCor^oner was elected by the body of freeholders for life and was himself a freeholder. As the Webbs remark, however, the term "freeholder" was an extremely wide one and coroners might well have been elected who were "representatives", so to speak, of the lower orders.¹ Blackstone hints that the Coroner was sometimes a man of mean social standing, more in sympathy with the lower classes than governing classes and states that the office had been suffered to fall into "low and indigent hands".²

At the same time the cases that have been mentioned were undoubtedly exceptional. In the normal course of events the Coroner's Jury acquitted riot-supporters^{nessors} of all blame, and no more was heard of the affair. High Constable Brasier of Colchester was, for example, implicated in the death of a rioter in 1724. The Coroner's Inquest completely cleared him, and the incident only comes to light in the State Papers Domestic because Brasier was arrested in London in defiance of the Coroner's Inquest and brought before a London magistrate, Sir Francis Forbes, on a charge of murder. The Major and Corporation/

¹ Webb B. & S. The Parish and the County. pp. 293-4, 302.
² Blackstone W. Commentaries. Book I Ch. 9. p. 347.

Corporation of Colchester sought legal advice from the Attorney General, who told them to produce the Coroner's Inquest before Sir Francis, who immediately released Brasier.

The Coroner's Inquest was indeed a very necessary check on the use of unnecessary violence, and cases such as Fechem's and Brickdale's, irritating though they undoubtedly were and possibly motivated by class hatred, were indications of a very healthy desire to restrain the disciplinary force exercised by riot suppression. In the case of Lowe and Abbis in 1715 the Attorney and Solicitor General obviously believed that Lowe and Abbis had acted in pure self defence. They were, however, equally aware¹ that a murder might have been committed, and so they advised strongly against the issue of an immediate pardon and submitted that the Indictment should be removed to the King's Bench and that the Coroner should send up his findings for examination, a very proper course of action followed throughout the period as a safeguard against the possibility of excessive and unreasonable measures being used by restorers of order.

¹

Northey and Lechmere to the King. August 13, 1715.
S.P.Dom 35/4.

VII. THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

It has already been pointed out that during periods of rioting the central and local government co-operated to an unusual degree; that magistrates were forced to ask aid of and report to the King's ministers because of their physical weakness when confronted with rioters: and that this joint action was a truly co-operative effort, the magistrates receiving troops but retaining command in their administrative areas. It has also been noticed that ministers and magistrates became increasingly less concerned with the real causes of riot and tended to concentrate on the maintenance of peace.²

The central government had thus resolved itself into an organisation for the supply of troops. The central figure in this organisation was undoubtedly the Secretary of State ~~to whom all organisation was undoubtedly the Secretary of State~~ to whom all requests for aid and reports were sent; it was he who decided whether help could be sent and set the machinery for sending such help in action.³ At a period when government were/

1

See Chapter I Part II on "The Magistrate".

2

See Chapter I Part II and Chapter II on "Rioting in the Cloth Industry of the South West"

3

It is, of course, highly probable that much of the routine work of administration was carried out by Secretaries such as Charles Delafaye whose name appears constantly in the earlier part of the period.

were not noted for efficiency or despatch, it is pleasing to record the immediate attention given to letters bearing tidings of riots and the consequent decisiveness of action. Even Newcastle (Secretary of State for the Southern Department 1724-48 and for the Northern Department 1748-1754), who has met such dire condemnation from posterity on other counts of jobbery and inefficiency, appears in the State Papers Domestic as a sympathetic ^{and} speedy administrator.¹ Riots were always matters of the highest import; the only obstacle to efficiency of treatment was the poorness of communication. The following table is compiled from documents dealing with riots in various parts of Britain:-

<u>Centre of Rioting</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Day's Distance from London</u>	<u>Mileage approximately</u>
Lincoln	1726	2	130
Trowbridge	1726	2	150
Falmouth	1728	3-4	250
Padstow	1732	3-4	250
Bridgnorth	1733	2	130
Bristol	1738	1-2	110
Norwich	1740	2	100
Newcastle	1740	3-4	250
Edinburgh	1740	5	350
Preston	1741	3	210
Leeds	1753	3-4	180
Thus/			

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See, for example, his attitude to the weavers in 1726-7 Chapter II Part I on Riots in the Clothing Industry of the South West.

Thus a request for help from Norwich could not be answered in less than four days, a request from Padstow in less than six days. Nevertheless, within this physical limitation, action was as speedy as possible. The following abstract of correspondence concerning the Cornish Corn Riots of 1737 will perhaps illustrate more amply the administrative machinery at work:-

September 18th. Mayor and Corporation of Falmouth to Newcastle enclosing a warning of an attack by Tinnors on the 19th, and imploring the help of a man o' war and thirty or forty soldiers.

19th. 1 Report of Collector of Customs at Penryn to Commissioners at London.

2 Report of Collector of Customs at Falmouth
(Both describe riots in Penryn and at Falmouth)

20th Justice Prideaux of Padstow to Newcastle describing the situation in the country.

22nd Duke of Newcastle to

1 Richard Edgecombe, M.P. requesting a report on the riots.

2 Mayor and Corporation of Falmouth promising immediate help.

26th/

- September 26th 1 Mayor and Corporation of Falmouth to Newcastle reporting on the situation.
- 2 Justice Prideaux reports to Newcastle from Padstow.
- 27th Arrival of Man-of-War "Torrington" at Falmouth with Troops.
- 28th Richard Edgecombe, M.P. reports to Newcastle
- 30th Richard Edgecombe M.P. reports situation completely settled.
- October 7th 1 Mayor and Magistrates of Penryn to Newcastle requesting the removal of troops from Penryn.
- 2 Justices of the Peace of Cornwall to Newcastle requesting the removal of troops from Cornwall.
- 8th Justice Prideaux to Newcastle emphasising the wisdom of removing troops from Cornwall.
- Undated Duke of Newcastle to Justice Prideaux informing him of the order to remove troops.¹

In/

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S.P. Dom. 36/42 and 36/43.

In this abstract one may observe the characteristic traits of most riots, - the appeal for help, the swift answer and response, the numerous reports and the final appeals to remove troops. It is interesting to observe, too, that the magistrate Prideaux apologised for approaching Newcastle directly,¹ intimating that his request for aid and other letters would normally have gone through the Lord Lieutenant of the County. This office was at the time vacant. The same procedure of approaching the government through the Lord Lieutenant was followed by the magistrates of Herefordshire during the Turnpike Riots of 1735, and by the magistrates of Leeds during the Turnpike Rioting of 1753. This approach to the head of the local militia² may well have been natural and generally customary at one time, but it had certainly had become most unusual by the early Eighteenth Century. Magistrates and civilians had for the most part no compunction whatsoever in addressing the Secretary of State direct.

There was, however, a form of procedure gradually taking place between the Secretary of State and the Secretary at/

¹ E. Prideaux to Newcastle. September 20th 1737.
S.P. Dom 36/42.

² Thomson M.A. A Constitutional History of England
pp. 153-155.

at War which would seem to reveal the gradual growth in importance of the Secretary at War. It has been remarked the "when troops of the regular army were employed to quell a riot an order from a Secretary of State to the Secretary at War would probably be necessary if the troops were to be moved from one place to another evidence over the period 1710-1760 is scanty." ¹ Evidence is indeed scanty but would indicate over the period 1714-1754 the gradual formation of a precise procedure.

In June 1719 Secretary Craggs communicated directly with the Officers at the Tower Barracks during the Calico Riots. ² The Secretary at War, George Treby, was, however, away in Germany ³ and Craggs' action should not perhaps be interpreted as a deliberate by-passing of the Secretary at War and his department. An example of what was probably the normal procedure is found in 1728, when Newcastle wrote to the Hon. Henry Pelham, Secretary at War, as follows:-

Sir,/

¹ Thomson M.A. Secretaries of State 1681-1782 pp 107-108.

² Secretary Craggs to Brigadier Richards June 13th 1719. S.P. Dom 35/66.

³ Secretary at War's Minutes May 21st 1719 S.P. Dom 35/66.

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Whitehall,
January 11th 1727/8.

Sir,

I herewith send you a copy of a letter which Mr. Edgecombe has received from some of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace in the County of Cornwall giving an account of an insurrection of many of the tinners who, being joined by the rabble of several parishes, have committed great disorders and are too numerous to be suppressed by the civil power alone. And I am to signify to you His Majesty's pleasure that you give orders for a sufficient detachment of His Majesty's Forces to march to the assistance of the civil magistrates to such places as Mr. Edgecombe shall think most proper.

I am, etc.

Holles Newcastle. ¹

Secretary at War.

During the Corn Riots of 1740 the duties of the Secretaries of State were very largely carried on by the Committee of Lords Justice of Regency.² The procedure between the Lords Justices and the Secretary at War seems to have become automati^c

¹ Newcastle to Secretary at War. January 11th 1728.
S.P.Dom. 36/5

² The "active" members seem to have been the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Chancellor, the Lord President, the Duke of Montagu and Newcastle, Walpole, and Sir Charles Wager.

On at least seven occasions ¹ ^{the} The Lords Justices, having decided to move troops from one part of the Country to another, either summoned the Secretary at War to their presence or communicated their orders in writing to him. There was no attempt to overlook his department and it is obvious that the Secretary at War had become the normal and established instrument of communication with the armed forces of the country. Removal of troops from a region where rioting had been quelled was also done by order of the Secretary of State to the Secretary at War. Thus in 1737 Newcastle informed Prideaux of Padstow that he "had spoke to Mr. Arnold the Deputy Secretary at War, to give immediate directions to have them removed."²

In 1753 there is a further indication of a recognised organisation in the refusal of the Secretary of State Holderness to issue special orders to the soldiers at Leeds at the request of the magistrates of Leeds. Holderness explained that soldiers sent to deal with riots were always given the same instructions by the Secretary at War and that any change in these/

¹ June 19th, June 24th, July 1st, July 3rd, July, 8th, August 28th and September 25th 1740.

² Newcastle to Prideaux. Undated. S.P. Dom. 36/43.

these instruction would necessitate an application to the War Office. ¹

The activities of Secretaries of State and Secretaries at War were often met with what must have seemed an ungracious lack of gratitude, for it was always the desire of the magistrates and men of importance in the neighbourhood to see the troops they had begged for in time of danger removed from the district as quickly as possible. From Falmouth in 1728 the Mayor, John Pye, sent an earnest request that fifty soldiers be removed as the innkeepers found the problem of providing lodging overwhelming.² The Bishop of Bath and Wells in the following year was asked by the Mayor and Corporation of Wells to intercede on behalf of the innkeepers of the City, many of whom had been rendered bankrupt by reason of the troops quartered on them since rioting had broken out in the cloth industry of the south-west.³ In 1737 the Justices of the Peace for Cornwall assembled at the General Quarter Sessions held at Bodmin sent up a Representation to Newcastle thanking him for timely help in the recent rioting but/

¹ Holderness to the Mayor and Magistrates of Leeds. October 13th, 1753. S.P. Dom 36/96.

² Mayor of Falmouth to Newcastle June 8th 1728 S.P.Dom. 36/7

³ Bishops of Bath and Wells to Newcastle December 24th, 1729. S.P.Dom. 36/16.

but pointing out that at the same time that the burden of maintaining the military was a grievous one.¹ Their representation was added to by similar appeals from the Mayor of Penryn² and members of the Country gentry.³ From Pembroke in 1740 came a similar complaint that the soldiers ordered thence to suppress the corn riot were proving too much for the innkeepers.⁴ The problem was, of course, a difficult one and troops sent to quell disturbances undoubtedly became a burden to the locality affected. Nevertheless, one can also sympathise with Newcastle's feelings when he reminded a magistrate that troops had been sent at the entreaty of the local Justices and had performed a useful service.⁵

Another Governmental difficulty lay in the preservation of ^{order in} towns during an election or an assize. At Bridgnorth in September, 1753³ the approaching parliamentary election had roused feeling in the town to such an extent that several of the Aldermen approached Newcastle for immediate military assistance/

¹ Justices of the Peace for Cornwall to Newcastle, October 7th 1737, S.P.Dom 36/43.

² Mayor of Penryn to Newcastle October 7th, 1737. S.P.Dom.36/43.

³ E. Prideaux and Others to Newcastle, October 7th, 1737. S.P.Dom. 36/43.

⁴ William Owen Esq., to Newcastle June 17th, 1740. S.P.Dom. 36/51.

⁵ Newcastle to E. Prideaux. June 17th, 1740. S.P.Dom 36/51.

assistance to preserve peace.¹ Newcastle was most disturbed at the thought of sending troops to an area during a time of election and consulted Sir Robert Walpole concerning the action to be taken. Walpole agreed that it was most unfortunate that troops should be sent, but could see no alternative; at the same time, he warned Newcastle that the Officers should be particularly instructed to act only on the order of a magistrate.² Ardent Whig supporters were also quick to remind the administration that there could be no worse blunder than the quartering of troops in a district during the holding of an election. The Government was particularly afraid of riots breaking out at Stafford and at York, and moved forces to both areas in April, 1734.³ Two Whigs, William Chetwynd from Stafford and Edward Thompson at York, immediately wrote to express their extreme surprise that these ~~movements~~ ~~merchants~~ had been ordered. Troops were, in their opinion, unnecessary, gave the Tories an opportunity for alleging government/

¹ Bailiff and twelve citizens to Newcastle. September 24th, 1733. S.P.Dom. 36/30.

² R. Walpole to Newcastle S.P.Dom. 36/30.

³ Newcastle to the Bailiff of Bridgmouth. S.P. Dom. 36/30.

government use of force in elections, and through the odium always attached to the military, threw local opinion against the government.¹

A similar problem arose in 1740 when the Secretary at War represented to the Lords Justices that riots were taking place at places where the Assizes were being held and that instructions had formerly by custom been given to troops to remove at such times. The Lords Justices gave directions that troops were to remain at the request of the High Sheriff ^{or} on the Magistrates of a town and were only to be removed unless especially required to do so by the Judge of the Assize.²

In the normal course of events rioting had broken out before the government became aware of it from information received from magistrates or private persons. On certain exceptional occasions the government envisaged the possibility of a riot and took steps to prevent the possibility of an outbreak./

¹ W. Chetwynd to Newcastle. April, 13th, 1734. S.P.Dom. 36/31.
E. Thompson to Newcastle. April 30th, 1734. S.P.Dom. 36/31.
Magistrates who were also M.P.'s could also be worried by the same problem. In 1740, during the Corn Riots at Stockton, Sir W. Williamson remarked to the Bishop of Durham concerning the Magistrates who was attempting to quell the riot. "I presume my friend Hedworth so near a new election would not be overforward to think of soldiers" May 24, 1740. S.P. Dom. 36/50.

² Minutes of the Lords Justices Whitehall July 15th 1740.
S.P.Dom. 36/50.

outbreak. For example, the government insisted that the Jacobite Laver's body should be buried in complete privacy lest a mob should be roused, and only handed the body over to his widow on the understanding that this was so.¹ There was, of course, a steady stream of letters, usually anonymous, informing the government of political opponents or Jacobites and their activities with mobs. In these cases insinuations always tended to outweigh proof, and the government showed itself more reasonable than its righteously indignant supporters.² There was often, too, the letter on broader issues such as the influence of the London press and its effect on mobs - "for where the mob is there the safety of a ministry and government resides".³ One writer estimated that in 1721 there were forty-one newspapers published in London each week and only three or four in favour of the government. The remedy proposed to the Secretary of State was that he should sponsor a cheap paper and see to it that loyal ballads and stories were circulated amongst chandlers, grocers and all retailers. Only thus could the government gain the sympathy of/

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Report of King's Messenger to Mrs. Laver. 22nd May, 1723.
S.P.Dom. 35/43

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See Chapter VI Part I on Jacobite Rioting.

3

Anonymous writer to Townshend. March 9th, 1721. S.P. Dom.
35/30.

of the "mobile". These letters were not always disregarded by the government, as can be seen from the case of "John Smith" in 1733 who wrote to Newcastle informing him that he had evolved a counter-plan against the "herd of scribblers" who were inflaming street mobs against the ministry.¹ Newcastle let "Smith" know that he was interested in his plan by publishing an agreed notice in the "Daily Journal", and received several letters containing information about ballad writers. This information was on investigation found to be worthless and "Smith's" letters were afterwards ignored. Another form of information came from "Beta" in 1722. "Beta" enclosed a report on the behaviour of a Jacobite preacher Massey of St. Alban's, who was suspected of stirring up mobs against the government and had been "called by Dr. Sacheverall himself 'the mob-driver'". "Beta" found the church packed with a mob of the lowest type of person for a service conducted by Massey but could make no objection to the form of service or sermon save that in the latter a parallel was drawn between the case of/

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"John Smith" to Newcastle, April 17th, 1733. S.P.Dom 36/29.

of Job and that of the Bishop of Rochester, and ^U~~pre~~ Christianity was shown to remain in the ranks of the Tory party. As has already been remarked, however, the Secretaries of State were a shrewd and discerning set of administrators, not likely to lay importance on sheer tittle-tattle, which is what most of these letters of party faction amounted to.

To supporters of order and suppressors of riots the Secretaries of State showed themselves firm friends. This was especially noticeable in cases where rioters had been killed and relatives or friends were attempting to press a charge of murder against a civilian or soldier involved in the suppressing of the riot.¹ The Secretaries of State saw to it that the accused persons were protected from legal attack--often conducted with a surprising perseverance--and that all legal expenses incurred by the defence were borne by the government. One has as examples the Cases of Samuel Lowe and Thomas Abbis of West Bromwich in 1715,² magistrates Underhill, Glassington, and Williams, who suppressed a riot in Drury Lane in 1722, and the cases of Stephen Fechem and John/

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See Chapter VI, Part II on "The Corner."

2

Advice to the King from Attorney General Northey.

August 13, 1715. S.P.D. 35/4.

John Brickdale of Bristol.¹ (In such matters, as in affairs of more general import such as the payment of a Sheriff's posse² or the use of military force to suppress civil disturbances,³ the Secretaries of State were of course dependent on the legal opinion of the Attorney or Solicitor General). On the other hand, to the Justices of the Peace who appeared to be taking insufficient pains to preserve peace and order the Secretaries of State could be harsh and rude. Thus in 1726 Townshend wrote⁴ accusingly to the Mayor of Lincoln, Hezekiah Brown, informing him that news of the Lincoln riots had reached the government and that Brown should immediately enquire into the riots and take better care of the peace of the city for the future. A similarly stiff reproof reached William Howard, Mayor of Henley, after a riot at Henley in 1743.⁵ The Secretaries of State leave the final impression of considerable efficiency in the handling of riots. Their/

¹ See Chapter VI, Part II on "The Coroner"

² Opinion of Northey. November, 29, 1715. S.P.Dom. 35/6.

³ Opinion of Northey. October 26, 1717. S.P.Dom. 35/10.

⁴ Townshend to the Mayor of Lincoln. October 22, 1726. S.P.Dom. 35/63.

⁵ Lord Justice to the Mayor of Henley. June 9, 1743. S.P.Dom. 36/61.

Their departments acted with sympathy, despatch and intelligence - knowing as they did that the preservation of public order is a main prerequisite of good government. They knew, too, that their efforts were in vain without a similar display of ability by the local representatives of government, and were justly annoyed when such a display was patently lacking.

VIII. THE RIOT ACT. (1 GEORGE I St. 2 c.5).

At the end of June, 1715 reports reached London of a serious outbreak of rioting in Lancashire.¹ High Church and Jacobite mobs attacked and destroyed Dissenting meeting-houses in the Manchester area, and it became apparent that the riots constituted the biggest threat to internal peace since the Sache^urell Riots of 1710. They were also the first really serious disturbances of the new reign.

On July 1, the House of Commons ordered that leave be given to bring in a Bill for presenting tumults and riotous assemblies and for the more speedy and effectual punishing of rioters. Attorney-General Jekyll and Solicitor General Barrington were requested to prepare and bring in the new measure. Their rough draft was discussed on July 15 by a Committee of the House with the Attorney General reported^{ing} the findings of the Committee to the whole House on July 16. The House also heard a report on the situation in Staffordshire where there had been serious outbreaks of rioting during the first two weeks of July. It was resolved that the new Bill be/

1 See Chapter VIII Part I on Jacobite Riots.

be made law as quickly as possible, that a strict enquiry be held into the Staffordshire riots and into the conduct of the magistrates of that region who were reported to have failed in the performance of their duty, that an exact account be taken of the damage suffered by Dissenters at the hands of the mob and that laws against papists and non-jurors be put into execution. A further motion that a comparison be made between the list of magistrates of Queen Anne's time and those holding office in 1715 was rejected. The Attorney General's Bill reserved its third reading in the House on July 18.¹

The 1715 Riot Act was thus passed as a consequence of the riots against Dissenting meeting-houses in June and July of that year. It has been necessary to emphasise this, as it has been stated by a most reputable authority that the Riot Act was passed as a result of the suppression of the Jacobite Rebellion.² This was not so. In fact the Riot Act had come into force before the outbreak of the 1715 Rising.

The/

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- 1 Journals of the House of Commons XVIII p. 194, p. 225 and p. Journals of the House of Lords XX P. 236. 227.
 - 2 Sir W. S. Holdsworth remarks in "A History of English Law" Vol. X P. 63: "the suppression of this rising (the 1715) clinched the argument of the Whigs that the Tories were little better than Jacobites in disguise, and enabled them to pass two measures, one of which gave great assistance to the executive, while the other (the Septennial Act) directly helped the Whigs to consolidate their Parliamentary government. The first of these measures was the Riot Act, which is still in force."
It may also be doubted whether the Riot Act was of "great assistance to the executive".

The introduction to the Act states its *raison d'être*:
 in that riots against the King and Government were in progress
 and that the punishment for rioters as laid down by previous
 Acts was not sufficiently heavy to act as a deterring force,
 a new Act had been deemed necessary. After July 31, 1715
 any peace officer having warning of a riot in progress should
 approach among the rioters "or as near them as he can safely
 come and read the following Proclamation:- "Our Sovereign
 Lord the King chargeth and commandeth all Persons, being
 assembled, immediately to disperse themselves and peaceably
 to depart to their habitations, or to their lawful business
 upon the pains contained in the Act made in the first year of
 King George made for preventing tumults and riotous assemblies.
 God Save the King." Should the rioters remain after the
 passing of an hour from the time of the reading of the Pro-
 clamation, they became forthwith felons without benefit of
 clergy and as such liable to the punishment of death. All
 persons who, while assisting peace officers to apprehend such
^{persons}
~~plane~~, caused death or injury to rioters were indemnified.
 Rioters who attacked places of worship or who opposed the
 reading of the Proclamation were also ipso facto felons.

Compensation/

Compensation to the owners of property damaged during a riot was to be claimed through the Courts of Record at Westminster from the inhabitants of the hundred or town in which the riot took place.

Finally, the Act was to be read at every Quarter Sessions and on every Leet or Law Day. Offenders were to be tried within twelve months of the occurrence of a riot, and Scottish Sheriffs, Stewards, Bailies and Magistrates were to have powers similar to those enjoyed by the English peace officers.

The 1715 Act bears a considerable relation with legislation of the later Tudors on riots. In 1550¹ it was enacted that, if twelve or more persons assembled to riot with the object of killing or imprisoning a Privy Councillor or of forcibly altering the laws of the country were summoned to disperse and remained together for an hour after the summons, all members of the assembly were guilty of treason. The crime of treason was amended to one of felony in 1553² and 1558.³ Thus the idea of proclamation and the hour's grace was an expedient borrowed from earlier legislation.

With/

1 3, 4 Edward VI c.5.

2 I Mary 2 c.12.

3 I Elizabeth c. 16.

With the death of Elizabeth in 1603, and for various political reasons,¹ the 1558 Act expired and riot was again treated as an offence akin to treason by an extension of the clause of Edward III's Statute of Treasons which made the levying of war against the King Treason. This was how matters stood before the passing of the 1715 Act, and from the legal viewpoint there were several reasons for dissatisfaction. The horrible punishment for treason was out of proportion to the offence of riot. Again, judicial opinion concerning treason and felony was itself confused in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. In the case of Rex v. Messenger and Others (1668) one of the judges, Hale, refused to agree with his colleagues that a riot to pull down bawdy houses was treason since, according to the 1553 Act, he considered it to be a felony². Again, in Danmarree's Case, 1710, ^{the issue has} Chief Justice Parker ^{been} summoned up as follows: "If Danmarree's case is good law it seems difficult to say that any riot excited by any unpopular measures, whether executive or legislative, is not high treason." Finally there was the uncertainty surrounding the legal position of the riot suppressor who had to bear the considerable/

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- 1 Holdsworth W.S. A History of English Law. Vol. VIII pp 327-328.
 2 Select Statutes, Cases and Documents. Ed. C. Grant Robertson. p. 437.
 The Constitutional History of Modern Britain 1485-1937.
 D.L. Keir P. 301. Holdsworth op. cit. p. 320.

considerable responsibility of deciding for himself whether a rioter was committing a felony or a mere misdemeanour and of tempering his restraining acts accordingly.

This was the legal muddle which the 1715 Act sought to end. To a certain extent the Act was successful for, provided that Proclamation had been made, the legal position of both rioters and riot suppressors was quite clear. Rioters automatically became felons after the passage of an hour from the reading of the Proclamation, and restorers of order were then enabled to take any measures necessary to achieve the dispersal and apprehension of rioters.

Unfortunately, too much depended on the reading of the Proclamation. This, by the very nature of the riotous events, could not always be made and, when this was so, all the obscurity and muddle of the pre-1715 period returned.¹ The legal snares of suppressing riots when no Proclamation had been made are well illustrated in the cases of the civilians Fechem and Brickdale, and of the soldiers Bushell, Morrice and Pickars.² In each case the person concerned was confronted with a desperate mob which, as bound by common law, it was his duty to suppress. The/

1 The legal position of the riot suppressor who read the Proclamation but was forced to act before the passing of the statutory hour's grace (c.f. Report on the Featherstone Riots 1893; Grant Robertson, Select Statutes, Cases, & Documents pp. 522-544) did not, so far as one knows, emerge during this period.

2 For a detailed discussion of these cases see Chapters on "The Coroner" and "The Soldier".

The suppressing, however, involving^{ed} the death of a rioter, and, as no Proclamation had been read with its accompanying hour's grace, the charge of murder was levied against each of the above named individuals. In such cases the government rescued the accused by issuing pardons or by removing the case by writ of certiorari to the Court of King's Bench. Thus, when no Proclamation had been made, riot suppressors were again faced with the awkward problem of adjusting their acts of suppression to a nicety; each man had "at his peril to hit the mean between excess and defect".¹

On another count, too, the reading of the Proclamation was vital; that is, the defence available to prisoners brought to trial for taking part in a riot. If the Proclamation had been read and had the hour elapsed, rioters were clearly felons and as such liable to sentence of death - as was demonstrated in August 1715 when two Worcester rioters, the first to be dealt with under the new Act, were both hanged.² On the other hand, with no Proclamation made, the chances of a successful defence were considerably increased, and defending counsel were given opportunity to wrangle as, for instance, did the advocate Robert Craigie in defence of the/

1 Holdsworth W.S. op. cit. Vol. VIII p. 330.

2 "They had not believed they would die for riot".
Scots Courant. August 2, 1715.

the Malt Tax rioters at Glasgow in 1725.¹ Craigie even used the argument that, as the soldiers had fired on the citizens of Glasgow and killed several persons, so it had been the duty of the citizens to seize the murderers - thus explaining away the pursuit of the soldiers of the mob to Dumbarton!

From the purely practical viewpoint the Act did little to achieve its first declared purpose, namely, the preventing of tumults. This was due, of course, to the absence in the country at large of an efficient police force. The preservation of order during serious outbreaks of rioting depended often on the presence of a military force; one journalist argued that this alone was sufficient reason for the establishment of a standing army.² Without military help, peace officers were at the mercy of the mob, and the task of approaching the rioters and reading the Proclamation must have been a most unenviable, and, at times, impossible one. At/

1 Information for Pannels against His Majesty's Advocate. September 28, 1725. S.P. Dom. 35/58.

2 The Bristol Oracle. August 5, 1749. See also (1) The Daily Gazetteer. 353, July 1736. "The necessity of a Standing Army". (2) Hanwicke's speech of July, 1736, in favour of a standing army and its use by Magistrates to suppress disorders. "Gentlemen's Magazine". Vol. VII pp. 373-44.

At Greenwich on March 27, 1722, Justices of the Peace, De La Motte, Sanderson, and Saxony went to the church to disperse a violent mob. The rioters however, "continued throwing great stones and sticks for some time at the said Justices and hurt them thereby very much, but though the said Justices endeavoured to prevail upon them quietly to disperse, they notwithstanding continued their said insults and abuses against the said Justices till it was near half an hour after nine of the clock in the evening when the said Justices were forced to cause the Proclamation in the Act of Parliament for preventing of rioters^{cus} and tumultuous assemblies to be openly read amongst them, and after the reading of the said Proclamation the Justices staying to see them dispersed they repeated the flinging of great stones at them which hurt them very much so that they were obliged to desire the officer who commanded the guards quartered in town on account of the magazine to come to their assistance."¹ There are many other such examples of rioters laughing at or despising the Proclamation.² There were in fact unsuccessful Proclamations over the whole period, particularly in areas where no military force was present.

From/

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- 1 Statement of the Justices of Greenwich 1722. S.P. Dom 35/
 2 e.g. Exeter 1717, Sunderland 1719, Spittlefields 1720, 30.
 Lymington 1725, St. Giles in the Fields 1728, Darlington
 1731, Shoreditch, Pembroke and St. Asaph 1740, Preston
 1741, Piccadilly 1744 and Leeds 1753.

From another viewpoint the Act was most unfortunate in that it obscured the common law duty of all citizens (civil and military) to suppress riot. Before the passing of the Act in 1715, this duty was emphasised in the public press and by Royal Proclamation. On July 25, 1715, for instance, a Proclamation stated: "in like manner all the subjects of this Realm are bound by law to be aiding and assisting in the suppression of such rebellions..... if the presence of such peace officer cannot be had or if such officer refuses to exercise his duty."¹ Following the passing of the Act, as far as is known, no such declarations appear nor are the duties of the subject dilated upon in the press. In legal opinion the common law obligations of each citizen were still recognised. Attorney General Northey, as has already been shown, stated in 1717 that "all his Majesty's subjects (among whom the soldiery are included) are to be assisting to the Civil Magistrates"² Hardwicke in a speech to a Committee of the Lords in July 1736 also mentioned that magistrates had a right to summon aid of all citizens to suppress ^{riots} ~~citizens~~.³ Holderness in 1753 reminded the magistrates of Leeds that they had the right to command the assistance/

1 The London Gazetteer. July 25, 1715. See also the Proclamation issued in The London Gazette November 2, 1714, to the same intent.

2 See Chapter V on "The Soldier".

3 For the report of the debates of the Lords in Committee, see The Gentleman's Magazine. Vol. VII pp. 373-411.

assistance of all the King's subjects to quell riots and breaches of the peace by force".¹ These statements, however, do not treat of the civilian's position when no peace officer was present. It was, in fact, an unfortunate effect of the Riot Act that the duty of the citizen to move on his own authority if confronted with a disturbance became obscured; the requirement of the Act that the Proclamation should be read by a peace officer tended to make riot suppressing seem an executive action where the presence of authority was a sine qua non.² Nor was it until 1832, following the Bristol Riots, that the position of the civilian subject was clarified.³ The position of the military subject during these years has already been discussed in detail;⁴ ~~it has been discussed in detail;~~⁴ it has been seen that, as a form/

1 Holderness to the Mayor of Leeds. October 13, 1753.
S.P. Dom. 36/123.

2 There were, of course, other reasons why civilians did not perform their uncongenial law duties. As has been seen in Part I, large-scale disturbances were often supported by local public sympathy. There was, too, the legal risk of suppressing riots on one's own authority.

3 "By the Common Law, every private person may lawfully endeavour, of his own authority, and without any warrant or sanction of the magistrate to suppress a riot by every means in his power". Again, "civil subjects not only may but are bound, to do their utmost, of their own authority, to prevent the perpetration of outrage, to put down riot and tumult". Grant Robertson op cit. pp. 518-519.

4 See Chapter V Part II on "The Soldier".

form of legal insurance, soldiers gradually insisted on taking action against rioters only in the presence and with the authority of magistrates or other peace officers. This was in effect a denial of common law duties.

The Riot Act of 1715 was primarily an Attorney General's measure. In intent a modification of legal machinery^r, its efficacy depended on the successful reading of the Proclamation - which in turn depended almost always on the presence of a sufficiently powerful military force. The importance of the Act was therefore legal rather than practical. Indirectly, it was responsible for the growth of an obscurity and a state of indecision which resulted at its worst in the tragedy of the Gordon Riots of 1780.







IX. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE POPULAR DISTURBANCES OF THE PERIOD.

In the following chapter an estimate will be made of the disturbances described hitherto. The incidence and causes of the riots, a rough estimate of the damage and casualties involved, and the extent to which the rioters achieved their ends, will be noted. Finally, with these observations made, it is hoped to delineate the significance of the disturbances of the period.

The incidence of rioting is best demonstrated on the accompanying map, on which the types and localities of the various outbreaks are inserted. It will at once be noted that the main disturbances take place around a line drawn from Cornwall through Devon, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, the North-West Midlands, East Lancashire, the West Riding and the Durham Coalfield. The South of England, with the exception of London, is free of large-scale disturbances. In Scotland, the two serious riots were at Glasgow and at Edinburgh.

When the causes of riot are examined it is at once apparent that the root of larger disturbances lay in economic distress. Corn Riots sprang from a shortage of food during periods of scarcity, when attempts at continued exportation were/



-  JACOBITE RIOTS
-  TURNPIKE RIOTS
-  INDUSTRIAL RIOTS
-  CORN RIOTS
-  MALT TAX
-  PORTEOUS RIOTS

RIOTS 1714-1754

were bitterly resented by men who were starving or who feared starvation. The weavers of Spitalfields and Norwich who rioted against the weaving of calicoes and the workmen of the clothing industry of the South-West were hungry and in fear of unemployment; they lived in the "distressed areas" of the Eighteenth Century. In the Newcastle coal industry, riots were the outcome of the victimisation of workpeople (who had no capital save their labour) by capitalist employers who were to all intents and purposes uncontrolled in their actions.

In other riots, too, economic discontent plays its part. To the people of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and the West Riding, the setting up of a turnpike gate was tantamount to raising the price of the necessities of life. Soldiers were disliked as symbols of Hanoverian rule, as members of a traditionally unpopular standing army and because of the frequent tactlessness of their officers; there was at the same time the economic irritant of having to provide quarters and provender for their sustenance. The Malt Tax Riot at Glasgow was, as its name implies, a demonstration against the imposition of a tax by the Westminster Parliament, while the Porteous Riots, though aimed finally at the person of Porteous, sprang originally/

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originally from a public sympathy with the occupation of the smuggler Wilson. The Scottish riots were very much the result of irritation caused by the economic bonds imposed^{by} the still unpopular Union of 1707. In the Jacobite Riots^{there may be} a background of economic distress to supplement the more apparent causes of sentimental attachment to the Stuart cause and fear of attacks¹ by the Hanoverian Whigs on the Church of England.

This study has not primarily been concerned with the small street-actions of town mobs. It may be mentioned however that the participants in such actions frequently appear in magistrates reports and newspaper accounts as "the lowest sort of people", "the poor people" or "the very lowest rank of people". There would appear to be a connection even in these small riots between poverty and turbulence. There were, of course, other factors involved. There was the excitement offered by a skirmish or mob action in an age when the highly organised entertainments of the present day did not exist; this excitement appealed frequently to apprentices and other youthful town dwellers. Then, too, resentment against forms of authority was an inducement to mob/

¹

See Chapter VIII Part I on "Jacobite Riots".

mob action, witness the attacks on jailors, bailiffs, members of the press-going and - most hated of all - informers (who enabled government to be enforced). Superstition, too, sometimes played its part as a motivating cause of the smaller riot as may be seen from the Lincoln Spire Riots and the occasional witch hunts. It is obvious from this brief survey that such mobs would have made excellent material for the bribery and suggestions of mob-raisers. Unfortunately, as has been earlier pointed out, evidence on the control and direction of mobs is lacking.¹ One must content oneself with the thought that the smaller riots are a commentary on the seamy side of eighteenth century urban life.

Any estimate of damages involved in riots is of necessity rough. The following list has, however, been tabulated:-

<u>Corn Riots</u>		<u>DAMAGE</u>	<u>DEATHS</u>
1728 & 1729	Falmouth	Corn cellars raided	
	& North Wales	One ship load of corn stolen	
1737	Penryn	Granaries attacked	
	Densbury	Barns & mills attacked	Several
1740	Stockton	One shipload of corn stolen	
	Sunderland/		

¹

See Chapter X Part I on "A collection of smaller riots".

<u>Corn Riots</u>		<u>DAMAGE</u>	<u>DEATHS</u>
1740	Sunderland	Granaries attacked	
	Newcastle	Granaries attacked	
		The Town Hall destroyed	
		£1,400 removed from the Town Chest	1
	Flintshire	One waggon load of corn seized	
		Granaries attacked	
		Homes of corn merchants attacked	
	Northampton, Colchester & Wisbech	Granaries attacked	5
	Norwich	Common Hall attacked	
	Carmathen & Pembroke	Granaries attacked	
	Edinburgh & Leith	Mills and granaries attacked	1
1753	Bristol	Guildhall damaged	
		One shipload of coal stolen	4

Clothing Industry of the
South West

1717	Taunton	Several houses destroyed. Looms smashed and cloth stolen	
1720	Tiverton	Stores of Irish wool burnt	
1725	Taunton	Looms smashed	
	Wiltshire	Looms smashed	
1727	Trowbridge	Destruction of cloth	Several
1729	Bristol	Destruction of two clothiers' houses	Several
1738	Melksham	Destruction of clothiers' houses	

Keelmen of Newcastle.

DAMAGE

DEATHS

1750

Strike for six weeks causing considerable loss to the industries around Tyneside. Keels destroyed and cargoes of coal dumped into the river.

Calico Riots.

1719-20

Dresses torn and destroyed

Turnpike Riots

1729

Bristol

Gates destroyed

1731

Gloucestershire

Gates destroyed

1734

Gloucester &
Ledbury

Gates destroyed

1735

Gloucestershire,
Wilton & Ledbury

Gates destroyed

1738

Wilton

Gates destroyed

1749

Bristol

Gates destroyed

1752

Selby

Gates destroyed

1753

Leeds, Halifax,
& Bradford

Gates destroyed

Several

The Glasgow Malt-Tax.
Riots.

1725

"Shawfields" house gutted

9

The Porteous Riots

1736

Door of the Toolbooth burnt

c. 10

Jacobite/

Jacobite Riots

DAMAGE

DEATHS

1714	Glasgow	Episcopalian Meeting House damaged	
	Dundee	Hanoverian windows broken	
	Bristol)	Hanoverian windows broken	2
	London)		
	Oxford		
1715	Lancashire & the N.W. Midlands	Over 30 Meeting Houses destroyed	
1716	London	Meeting Houses attacked	1

Anti-military Riots

1716	Ashbourne	Broken windows	
	Oxford		

Gin Riots

1737-1		At least 10 informers beaten to death
--------	--	---------------------------------------

Considering the scale of the larger riots the damage caused was moderate in extent, as was also the number of persons killed. When one reflects that there were probably more people killed in the small mob actions against informers after the passing of the 1736 Gin Act than the combined total of deaths in riots in the Clothing Industry, in the Newcastle Coal Industry/

Industry, and in Turnpike Rioting, one realises that there was a certain respect for life shown by the participants in really large disturbances where the rioters had definite grievances which contrasted favourably with the frequent brutality and sadism of small town mobs.

As far as the results of the riots are concerned, it is apparent that the greater part of the disturbances were of no avail, and that few rioters saw their aims realised. The Porteous Rioters killed Porteous, the Gin Rioters successfully baulked the Gin Act, the Lincoln Spires Rioters preserved the spires, and the Calico Rioters obtained their Act of Parliament forbidding the wearing of calicoes. Elsewhere the disturbances had little effect. No change was made in the policy towards corn exportation. Turnpike rioters held up the establishment of tolls for a mere fragment of time. Riots in the clothing industry and in the Newcastle coal trade had no effect on the conditions of work suffered by weavers and by keelmen. The Jacobite Rioters were completely ineffectual, and the violent demonstration made at Glasgow against the imposition of the Malt Tax was of no avail.

From the political point of view, the disturbances of these years/

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years, so far from revealing a seditious spirit, emphasise rather the stability of the Hanoverian government. The weaknesses of Jacobitism as a militant force were clearly demonstrated in the 1715 riots, and in the other large disturbances there is no trace of disaffection, - and this despite a tendency by Whigs and Whig newspapers to see Jacobitism in every disorderly assembly. The disturbances are indeed indirect evidence as to the internal stability of the Hanoverians.

The final significance of these riots is that they display the machinery of Eighteenth Century government at work when faced by the fundamental problem of government, namely the preservation of public order. Of the machinery itself it may be said that, considering the handicap of working without an organised police force, it functioned satisfactorily. Secretaries of State carried out their duties capably and with as great a despatch as contemporary communications would permit. Justices of the Peace generally showed themselves men of initiative and courage. Central and local government, together with the military, combined as effectively as was then possible. The disturbing fact, however, is that government had ceased/

ceased to be interested in the causes which gave rise to riot. With the passing of the years the central government and magistrates tended increasingly to concentrate merely on the preservation or restoration of order. The age of "administrative nihilism" was in effect already in being; the principles of non-interference between master and man were largely accepted. The conduct ^{of} ~~and~~ the ^{central} ~~control~~ and local government during the riots of the early Eighteenth Century would bear little comfort for working classes shortly to be submitted to the increased distresses accompanying the so-called Industrial and Agrarian Revolution. This is the chief tragedy unfolded by the present study.

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APPENDIX OF SELECTED DOCUMENTS

The Newcastle Riots of 1750.

1. The Mayor of Newcastle to the Duke of Belford giving information of a six weeks strike amongst the keelmen.
30th April, 1750.
S.P.Dom. 36/122.
2. An Explanation of the Keelmen's Representation of Grievances. 1750.
Newcastle Guildhall Archives.
3. Case of the King against the Keelmen. 1750.
Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

The Corn Riots of 1740.

4. Allegations of George Colley to Sir George Wynne Bart. concerning the agents of Sir Thomas Mostyn, May 25, 1740.
S.P.Dom. 36/50.
5. W. M. Price Esq. to the Secretary of the Lords Justices June 13, 1740, reporting on the situation in Flint.
S.P.Dom. 36/51.
6. The Mayor of Newcastle to the Duke of Newcastle describing the state of affairs at Newcastle.
June 20th 1740.
S.P.Dom. 36/50.
7. Minutes of the Council of Regency directing troops to Newcastle.
June 24th 1740.
S.P.Dom. 36/51.
8. The Mayor of Newcastle to the Duke of Newcastle describing a riot. 27th June, 1740. S.P.Dom. 36/51.
9. Minutes of the Council of Regency directing further companies of Foot to march to Newcastle.
July 1, 1740. S.P.Dom. 36/51.

10. The Mayor of Newcastle to the Duke of Newcastle giving intimation of the end of rioting.
August 9th, 1740. S.P.Dom. 36/51.
11. Attorney and Solicitor General's Opinion about the Newcastle Rioters.
31st July, 1740. Newcastle Guildhall Archives.
12. Statement of John Todd, pitman, concerning the riots.
Newcastle Guildhall Archives.
13. Announcement of agreed prices of wheat, rye and oats.
Newcastle Guildhall Archives.
14. Captain Sowle to the Mayor of Newcastle, arranging the formation of an adequate guard.
July 2, 1740.
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15. Notice concerning the buying of corn by country folk.
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16. Brief for the King against Rioters, 1741 Assizes.
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17. Sir W. Williamson Bart. to the Bishop of Durham, describing riots at Durham and thereabouts.
May 24, 1740. S.P. Dom. 36/50.
18. Sir W. Williamson Bart. to the Bishop of Durham describing legal points at issue before the raising of the posse comitatus. June 10, 1740. S.P.Dom. 36/51.
19. Sir W. Williamson Bart. to the Bishop of Durham describing the raising of the posse comitatus.
June 15, 1740. S.P.Dom. 36/51.

The Riots of the Clothing Trade of the South West.

20. The Petition of the Weavers of the South West, (1718), describing their grievances. S.P.Dom. 35/14.
21. J. Cooper J.P. to the Duke of Newcastle describing riots in Wiltshire.
November 28, 1726. S.P.Dom. 35/63.

22. Colonel C. A. Powlett to J. Cooper J.P. describing methods of appeasement taken at Frome.
Dec. 3, 1726. S.P.Dom. 35/63.
23. Appeal from four Justices of Wiltshire to the Duke of Newcastle for military aid.
December 17, 1726.
S.P.Dom. 35/63.
24. First report of G. Earle to Viscount Townshend on conditions and causes of the riots.
December 26, 1726. S.P.Dom. 35/63.
25. Second report of G. Earle to Viscount Townshend.
December 28, 1726. S.P.Dom. 35/63.
26. Third report of G. Earle to Viscount Townshend.
December 31, 1726. S.P.Dom. 35/63.
27. First report of G. Vaughan to Viscount Townshend.
December 31, 1726. S.P.Dom. 35/63.
28. Viscount Townshend to G. Vaughan encouraging the idea of a Petition to Parliament.
January 2, 1727. S.P.Dom. 35/64.
also January 4, 1727.
29. J. Cooper J.P. to G. Earle describing unfortunate activities at Bradford.
January 4, 1727. S.P.Dom. 35/64.
30. Second Report of G. Vaughan to Viscount Townshend describing a deterioration in the situation.
January 2, 1727. S.P.Dom. 35/64.
31. Third Report of G. Vaughan to Viscount Townshend describing successful pacification of weavers.
January 9, 1727. S.P.Dom. 35/64.
32. Petition for mercy from W. Merricke, weaver.
March, 1727. S.P.Dom. 35/64.
33. "Englishman" to Lord Harrington describing conditions in the clothing trade.
February 28, 1738. S.P.Dom. 36/47.

34. R. Holland to Lord Harrington describing convictions of several riotous weavers.
March 17, 1738. S.P.Dom. 36/47.
35. R. Holland to the Duke of Newcastle requesting troops to deal with rioting weavers.
September 9, 1741. S.P.Dom. 36/56.
36. Representatives of the Clothiers of Bradford and Melksham to R. Holland describing illegal actions taken by the weavers.
September 9, 1741. S.P.Dom. 36/56.

The Porteous Riots, 1736.

37. Inspection of whereabouts of apprentices and servants on the night of the murder of Porteous.
20 October, 1736. Edinburgh Burgh Council Minutes.
38. Returns of investigations.
Edinburgh Burgh Council Minutes.
39. Lord Provost Wilson to a member of Edinburgh Corporation, while in the custody of Black Rod.
2 April, 1737. Edinburgh City Archives.
40. Member of Edinburgh Corporation to Lord Provost Wilson advising him of likely hostile witnesses.
26 April, 1737. Edinburgh City Archives.
41. John Din, Sergeant, to Edinburgh Corporation, explaining his reasons for going to London.
April 25, 1737. Edinburgh City Archives.

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42. Secretary to the Justices of Regency to the Deputy Keeper of Signet concerning the indictment of the King's Officers.
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43. Secretary to the Justices of Regency to Viscount Townshend concerning the legal difficulties of the defence of Captain Bushell.
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44. Captain C. Simons to Lords Justices enclosing a list of prisoners. December 1, 1726. S.P.Dom. 35/60.
45. A true account of the Malt Tax Riots by the Corporation. July 7, 1725. Glasgow City Archives.
46. An Address to the King, justifying the conduct of the Glasgow Magistrates.
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also S.P.Dom. 35/57.
47. A Letter to the Lords Justices of Regency from the Corporation of Glasgow.
August 11, 1725. Glasgow City Archives.
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49. The Colliers' Letter to the Turnpike.
July 3, 1727. Gloucester Shire Archives.
50. Petition of S. Jones, Carpenter, for payment for re-erecting Turnpike Gates.
15 September, 1729. Bristol City Archives.
51. The Mayor and Magistrates of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle giving information of some riots of Kingswood colliers and forwarding Informations.
October 9, 1738. S.P.Dom. 36/46.
52. The Mayor of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle describing the continuance of the riots.
October 11, 1738. S.P.Dom. 36/46.
53. The Mayor of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle reporting the cessation of tumults.
October 14, 1738. S.P.Dom. 36/46.

54. The Mayor of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle concerning the discovery of rioters.
December 9, 1738. S.P.Dom. 36/46.
55. The Mayor of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle describing a riot of Kingswood Colliers.
May 21, 1753. S.P.Dom. 36/122.
56. The Mayor of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle describing further riots and appealing for military help.
May 25, 1753. S.P.Dom. 36/122.
57. The Petition of Eight Colliers to the Duke of Newcastle.
January 3, 1754. S.P.Dom. 36/125.
58. Report of the Attorney General on the Colliers' Petition.
January 17, 1754. S.P.Dom. 36/125.

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August 13, 1715. S.P.Dom. 35/4.
60. Opinion of Northey on proposed payment of constables.
November 29, 1715. S.P.Dom. 35/4.
61. Opinion of Northey on an appeal by the magistrates of Tiverton for military help.
October 26, 1717. S.P.Dom. 35/10.
62. Opinion of Yorke on the Case of S. Fechem of Bristol, together with a letter from Fechem.
December 20, 1729. S.P.Dom. 36/16.
63. Petition and Memorial of J. Brickdale together with Ryder's Opinion on the Case.
June 21, 1753. S.P.Dom. 36/122.

Various.

64. Petition of the Company of Barbers and Surgeons.
S.P.Dom. 35/2.

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65. S. Legge to Viscount Townshend describing the political situation at Norwich.
August 30, 1722. S.P.Dom. 35/32.
 66. M. Hasledine to the Dean of Lincoln describing riots caused by repair to the Cathedral.
September 24, 1726. S.P.Dom. 35/63.
 67. Viscount Townshend to the Mayor of Lincoln ordering an investigation. October 22, 1726. S.P.Dom. 35/63.
 68. The Mayor of Lincoln to Viscount Townshend.
October 24, 1726. S.P.Dom. 35/63.
and October 29, 1726.
 69. The Bishop of Lincoln to Viscount Townshend.
November 1, 1726. S.P.Dom. 35/63.

The Mayor of Newcastle to the Duke of Bedford.

S.P.Dom. 36/112.

My Lord Duke,

The Keelmen employed on the River Tyne in carrying coals on board the ships have for these six weeks past refused to work under a pretence of some grievances. The Magistrates of this town sent for the men and their masters and redressed their first complaints immediately; but the men would not go to work without having their wages advanced which were very extravagant demands and could not be complied with. The men have remained idle without doing any mischief and we are proceeding upon the Act of the 20th of his present Majesty and have committed sixteen of the offenders to prison, and shall go on in the same way and hope to bring the men to their duty.

I think it my duty to acquaint your Grace of this; and particularly of an affair that happened on Friday, which we did not get information of until late on Saturday evening; upon which we issued the Proclamation which I take the liberty to enclose to your Grace. We are using all the endeavours we can to find out the persons and shall leave nothing that is in our power undone to get at the bottom of the affair and shall be glad to receive your Grace's directions in what you think proper. There are six Companies of the Earl of Ancram's Regiment quartered in the town under the command of Major Rufane who is ready to assist the civil power in case of necessity.

A person who calls himself Herdman and pretends to be lawyer of Edinburgh has been extremely instrumental in advising and spiring up the Keelmen; but at present he conceals himself in the neighbourhood of the town and out of the limits of our jurisdiction. However we hope to apprehend him soon. I am, with the greatest regard

Your Grace's most obedient, humble, servant,

Robert Lorsbie, Mayor.

Newcastle upon Tyne
30th April, 1750.

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Enclosed

Newcastle upon Tyne

April 28, 1750.

Information upon Oath having been made this day before five of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said town, that yesterday between the hours of twelve and one o'clock at noon several persons to the informant unknown and who appeared by their habits to be keelmen (and who as the Informant verily believes were Keelmen) were seen in one of Elswick Fields near this town; and that one of the said persons in company with about five others, stood up on a stile and said, I proclaim Prince Charles, King of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith; and let every one of my way of thinking say Amen; or used words to the number of four at least immediately rose up and said Amen.

The Corporation of Newcastle hereby promise a Reward of One Hundred Pounds to any person or persons who shall discover the person making the said Proclamation, or any of the Person's saying Amen, as aforesaid, to be paid by the Town Clerk upon the conviction of such offender or offenders.

By Order of the Magistrates.

Cuthbertson.

An Explanation of the Keelmen's Representation.

Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

We the Skippers and the Keelmen on the River of Tyne being informed that many of the grievances in our former Representation are hardly understood even by the Gentlemen Coal Owners themselves or any body else except we who are the sufferers and such are the gainers by the practices complained of, we do therefore by leave to make some explanations of our grievances.

We would not be understood to complain of all the Gentlemen Fitters for there are several of them who have not laid any hardships upon us but are rather willing to hear and redress our grievances if they could prevail on the rest to be unanimous therein.

As to the first of our grievances touching the Overmeasure, the Gentlemen Fitters have proposed a remedy much worse than the distemper, namely, that if any Keel be too deep laden the same is to be brought to the quay and booked upon by the King's Inspector. Now it is submitted whether this be practicable for though we are liable to a visit from him, he is not subject to answer the call either of us or our Masters. However, the King's Measure is so self-evident and plain by the mark or nail on each keel that it is impossible for us or any person to err in the observation of it. As to the Second Article of our Representation touching the confined can-houses there are a variety of hardships included in this grievance. First, every five shillings of market money we receive there is threepence stopped from each of us; second, if we pay but one keel of borrowed coal to any other Fitter than our own immediate Master, there is threepence taken off the Skipper for that; third, we are obliged to spend more of our money than we can afford in waiting at these houses for orders and if we refuse to wait or share in drinking we are abused and threatened by the can-house keepers who are all the Fitters' servants to be trusted out of our own keels and as this rank of our Masters (for we have many degrees of Masters) as we are informed have no other wages but the benefits of these can-houses, they make it as considerable a perquisite as possible for which reason we have not the same liquor as other customers, but a certain other liquor is brewed for us which they call Savage Beer or Beer for savages, at the same /

same time doing us the honour to take the Gentleman's price for it.

As to the Third Article of our Representation touching the Spout Sixpences, there is one shilling of our money which is allowed by the coal owners to each keel each tide which shilling is sunk in the following manner; we are obliged to fill two quarts of bad drink for our sixpence and we must carry the other sixpence to the staith for two loaders to help us but the staithmen to engross this perquisite to themselves oblige us to lie out at the staith a whole day for the lucre of this dear sixpence and then we are forced to go down to Shields in dark and stormy nights to the danger of our lives besides the loss of our tides so that to gain them six pence we often lose thirteen shillings and four pence and the staithmen themselves have oftentimes acknowledged that they made Fifty Pounds a year by this perquisite and say they who are Savages would not complain of this.

As to the Fourth Article of our Representation it needs no other explanation than this, that the Ship-masters instead of giving us good beer to the value of one shilling and fourpence or the money sometimes order their servants to give us a small quantity of stuff sometimes sour and sometimes yeast which if we venture to drink it is ready to kill us, and has killed some of us on account of our being overheated with hard labour.

As to the Fifth Article of our Representation, the necessity of our money being paid on a Saturday morning appears from this, that when our payment is delayed till it's late we or our wives must go to market to a very great disadvantage both with regard to the quality and price of provisions and sometimes there is nothing left in market for us.

As to the Sixth Article of our Representation, can anything be more moderate than our demand of a Shilling for a man to travel from Shields and back for and with fresh orders; it is just three farthings a mile.

Now with respect to our going down to Shields after twelve o'clock upon Saturdays it is a considerable loss to us because ships are not always ready being frequently at the ballast quay when we came there and the Fitters often send /

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send great numbers of keels to finish ships on that day because they will not allow us for lying tides on Sundays as on other days although we are both kept from our families and likewise from public worship which it is our desire to attend however we may be derided for it.

As to the stirred keels, this grievance has crept upon us in the following manner; the Skipper of each keel is entitled to twenty pence more wages than the other man, but the Fitters to engross this perquisite likewise to themselves make a practice of enticing a common man to stirr keels for their benefits for a groat extraordinary so that the Fitters have sixteen pence each of their stirred keels and to such a height some of them have carried this practice that they have a stirred keel for each child and such as have no children make a perquisite of stirred keels for the benefit and according to the number of their horses and dogs. Now as these perquisites is the right and property of skippers only we cannot help looking upon it as a very great encroachment upon us and a great discouragement to such as spend their lives and labour to enrich those that oppress us. We may venture to affirm that two thirds of all the keels in the River are employed as stirred keels. As to the shilling we demand for shifting a Ship from the quay we earn it very hard, for when a ship lies aground alongside of the quay we have a stage to hang with ropes and two of our men must stand in their keel's hold and throw the coals to other two of our men who stand on the stage who throw them into the ship's hold, and when we are denied payment (which is often the case) we only receive our holiday title of Savages.

As to our fire coals, the Fitters agree that is is our due to have a cauldron yearly for each keel yet many of us do not receive it.

Upon the whole when what is above represented is duly weighed and considered we hope the just part of mankind will be of opinion that all our grievances ought to be redressed and such methods taken to adjust and settle our demands as to prevent any necessity of further complaints so that the coal trade may be carried on with quietness and expedition to accomplish which our laborious endeavours shall never be wanting.

Lastly the making in of coals and helping of barrows is /

is a great imposition on us for when we labour hard to come home to our respective staiths we are over-wearied and yet are not allowed time to take the least refreshment but must at the demand of Fitters' men and staithmen directly go and make in coals and help barrows which is no part of our duty as keelmen.

We the poor persecuted and oppressed keelmen of Tyne River having first represented our grievances to the worthy magistrates of this Town and County and afterwards explained them do now in obedience to your commands come to attend your court but certainly under the greatest disadvantages, awed by the dignity of office and superior fortunes, as well as unable to argue with gentlemen of more generous education. Nor will (we believe) any gentleman that professes the Law here chance to incur the resentment of our opponents (made formidable by the sweat of our brows) by appearing to speak on our behalf.

The Contract or Articles in 1744 now insisted on was broke only by our various taskmasters without regarding the injustice done to us and dishonour done to your Worships who then vouchsafed to be their guarantees. If it was a contract it was actually binding, and if it is no tie upon those who signed it, it can never be interpreted an obligation upon us who did not sign it. And if our being hired for a year is insisted on we affirm the Covenants of that hiring are likewise broke by our taskmasters. Indeed nothing is more plain than their intention to starve us into a compliance with what hardships they resolve to impose on us, and how far those may extend after the laws of justice have already been by them openly transgressed is hard to determine.

The other hardships not mentioned in the Articles of 1744 and now complained of do in justice and reason call for and are entitled to redress as well as the others, though we have been denied the liberty to explain and publish them in opposition to that so much contended by one of the press nor are we allowed in that manner to vindicate ourselves against the false aspersions which were assigned for the cause of the Government sending troops by forced marches against ignorant oppressed men.

As we act from the first principle of nature - self-preservation - so we doubt not of finding some of both power and influence sufficient to support our just claim as well as /

as to represent it in a true and public light in which we hope this court will be found to have acted with impartiality, honour and justice for we are determined rather than have a hand in our own ruin to apply to the Courts of Earth and Heaven where we shall either find or not need advocates. This is the sense of all of us and we will continue unanimous in it. And as the honour of this Court can never allow a stumbling block to be laid in the way of our ignorance so we are resolved not to entrap ourselves by entering upon arguments beyond what is here contained.

The Case against the Keelmen.

Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

Newcastle Assizes 1750.

The King against Keelmen - Cuthbertson.

Case:-

The coals which are vended at the port of Newcastle-upon-Tyne are conveyed by Keels from the staiths to the ships; each of the Keels employed in conveying these coals Skippers and Keelmen for the most part are hired servants to Fitters and are bound by Articles to the Fitter under whom they are employed at certain rates or wages for the space of one year, and are bound or hired by Fitters at Christmas annually to serve till Christmas again, and the work which they are to perform as also the wages or rates they are to be paid for the same are partly agreed upon and settled between them and the Fitter at the time of hiring or binding. And every Skipper of a Keel has given him by his Fitter or Master 20 or more for his own and men's use as a gratuity.

On the 19th March, 1750 a number of the Skippers and Keelmen employed in the coal works at Newcastle thought proper to desist working or following their employment though bound or hired for a year as aforesaid from Christmas 1750 to Christmas 1751. Those Keelmen not choosing to work themselves or suffering others to work who were inclinable to do so in a riotous manner assembled on the River Tyne and New Quay in Newcastle on the said 19th March, and there stopped and prevented all Keels from passing and repassing on the River and coals from being cast on board ships and to complete their undertaking. Several parties of them on the 20th and 21st March assembled in the like manner and went to Shields and there boarded several Keels lying there belonging to several fitters in Newcastle and broke open the burrichs or cabins of the said Keels and broke and destroyed all the shovels, powies, hurrick and cabin stores and other utensils and work gear belonging to those keels and then returned great triumph to Newcastle. By which outrageous proceedings that great and valuable branch /

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branch of trade was stopped and obstructed and those rioters became sole masters of the River and the navigation thereof to the impoverishment of many families and others employed in that service, and the preventing many ships being loaded with coals and other merchandise bound for London and foreign parts and many of the outward bound ships were obliged for want of coals to proceed in their ballast to their respective ports and other ships bound to London next to other ports to load and some detained in the harbour for seven or eight weeks for want of coals. Nor would they permit a vessel to be laden with coals on his Majesty's account bound for the use of the garrison at Gibraltar or permit any coals to be carried for the use of the glasshouses, salt works, engines and other manufactories carried on in the River Tyne or for the use of a private family and the whole town and the neighbouring county were all this time in the greatest consternation for the consequence of their outrageous proceeding.

The Magistrates of the town published orders for all the idle people to go to work, at the call of their respective masters and in their said Orders promised their protection and security for all their just rights and demands. But all was to no purpose and they continued in such a riotous behaviour that there is the greatest reason to believe nothing but the presence of the military force prevented them from plundering the town. Some of the skippers were committed by the Magistrates upon proper Informations and Convictions to the House of Correction upon the late Act of Parliament. But this had no effect to make them return to their duty and still refusing to work and there being a great demand as well at home as abroad for coals for the benefit of trade it was thought prudent and admissable to procure tailors, waggon-men, labourers and others to carry on the business instead of the Keelmen, which was done accordingly for some days and the Keelmen perceiving that their business would be done without their assistance they on the 4th May last between the hours of 1 and 2 o'clock in the afternoon riotously assembled to the number of 1000 and upwards at a place called Sandgate Shore near Newcastle and there manned Keels and boats and lay in the middling of the River and stopped all laden Keels navigated by masters of ships, sailors, etc. and brought them to an anchor and barbarously beat and abused the sailors etc. employed in such Keels and prevented them going aboard their vessels and broke and destroyed and threw into the River the work gear belonging to the Keels and by force and violence took a Skipper and of /

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of one of those Keels which belonged to Mr. Alderman Sowerly and Mr. Colpits and greatly beat and abused them and threw the Skipper one William Cole into the River who narrowly escaped being drowned. And thus they continued assembled as aforesaid for near two hours when the Magistrates with the military force were obliged and did much to disperse them to the shore side whilst an armed power was employed against them on the River. And the trade by that means was open for that day until when they thought proper to return to their work. Informations being made against some of the most notorious rioters it is thought proper for example's sake and the safety and peace of the town and the neighbouring counties to prosecute some of the offenders. And it is hoped that the Court will inflict exemplary punishment on such as shall be found guilty.

Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

Information of Joseph Dixon, Sergeant at Mace, taken 27th April, 1750.

Informing saith that he was on Monday last in company with one William Dollar, yeoman. Saith that the said Dollar told him that he was writer or scrivener for the Keelmen at the request and by direction of Mr. Herdman and wondered that the magistrates should send for Herdman and not summon him.

G. Colley, Merchant to Sir George Wynne, Bart.

S.P.Dom. 36/50.

May 25th, 1740.

Honoured Sir,

After you have perused the melancholy subject please to send it for post as directed. We had a very narrow escape from being murdered yesterday, the mob being just upon me.

On Friday the mob from Cefnoes were at Conway by order of Ridgeway as several and Mr. Price in particular told us before several and that they had a warrant to stop all corn from Dr. Jones and your agent John Davis was at the head of his people and talked very impertinently to Mr. Price as he said the men declared they were advised to do it by Mr. Humphrey Parry and others.

I am etc.
G. Colley

Written under a hedge 25 May, 1740.

P.S. I just received an account that as soon as the mob came to Edward Ellis, John Stevenson, and Wm. Parry, Sir Thomas Mostyn's Agent, John Wynne his reeve of the coal work, and Mr. John Norman Agent to the Gadle's Company at Tredogan, and although Ellis, Stevenson and Parry its thought they had 5000 measures of wheat, barley and malt yet upon their appearing they all desisted so that it's plain it's a concerted thing for Ellis is a friend of Sir Thomas Mostyn, Stevenson is a tenant to Colonel Pennant, Parry is a tenant to Sir Thomas Mostyn and Mr. Richard Williams and Ellis, Stevenson and Parry ship a deal of grain.

Signed G. C.
John Evans
Edward Williams.

The Report of W. M. Price Esq. J.P. to Andrew Stone Esq.,
Secretary to the Lords Justices of Regency.

S.P.Dom. 36/51.

St. Asaph

June 13, 1740.

Sir,

In obedience to their Excellencies' Commands signified to me by you, and in conjunction with several of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace of the County of Flint, we have with the greatest diligence, and to the utmost of our power made enquiry as to the author of the disorders that have happened at Ruddlan and other parts, and cannot find that any one person whatsoever of any note or consideration was concerned in aiding or abetting those disturbances, which first took rise as appears to us by some loose or disorderly men, women, and boys giving out at Holywell in this County that they were resolved to stop the corn of one Mr. George Colley (a considerable dealer in that commodity) and others at Ruddlan from going to sea and were upon this joined by several colliers and miners from the adjacent collieries and mine works and that at three different days. Inclosed are the Informations and Examinations upon oath of some of the principal inhabitants of Ruddlan and sufferers there as to facts committed and to which we beg leave to refer. And further to add that upon the strictest enquiry from whence the rioters were supplied with some arms they appeared with, we find some of them were their own, others they took forcibly from different houses particularly from Mostyn Hall where the family were from home, seven or eight old swords and halberds and a rusty musket.

Upon the whole and to the best of our judgment we must attribute this commotion to the necessity of the people, to the sudden rise of the market (almost double the usual price of corn), to the exporting great quantity of it from Ruddlan to other countries when a scarcity was felt and apprehended and to their hearing that it was stopped in other parts of England from being shipped off. That these beginnings gave opportunity to other loose and disorderly persons to assemble, and do considerable mischiefs in a riotous way, which it is to /

to be hoped is now stopped by the markets being supplied with corn in a peaceable manner by the assistance of His Majesty's troops and by the care that has been taken by the several owners and agents for the collieries and mine-works and the Justices of the Peace to deter all workmen against such practices.

This being an affair of consequence I thought proper to have the assistance of the Justices whilst examinations as to what was done at the seaside were taken, which were sent up last post. They might have been multiplied, but were all to the same effect. I have presumed to add a Memorandum taken at the time for my own satisfaction, all of which is most humbly submitted to their Excellencies by, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant
W. Price.

Several of the principal rioters are not secured and as is to be hoped all affairs in a peaceable way.

To Andrew Stone, Esq.

The Mayor of Newcastle to the Duke of Newcastle

S.P.Dom. 36/51.

Newcastle upon Tyne

20 June, 1740.

May it please your Grace,

We His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for this town and county think it our duty to acquaint your Grace that the pitmen employed in the neighbouring collieries on pretence of the high price of corn assembled here yesterday in very great numbers and behaved in a most riotous manner breaking open the granaries of several corn merchants forcing into the houses of diverse other persons stopping the corn carriages passing through the streets and seizing and carrying off great quantities of corn.

Upon the first notice thereof we met and used our endeavours to preserve the peace, but the crowd and tumult appeared manifestly too strong for the magistrates to control. We therefore could have recourse only to persuasions and arguments with the chief of them to disperse and return to their work, but all in vain 'till the merchants proposed to sell on the next market day (being to-morrow) their wheat at 4s., their rye at 3s., and their oats at 1s. 6d. per Winchester Bushell, which prices as they aver are considerably under the price cost, and publish notice thereof being given. The leaders of the riot promised not only to disperse themselves and their fellows, but to return the corn they had seized to the respective owners, nevertheless they are neither gone to work or dispersed, nor will deliver back the corn as promised, and further declare their intention of recognising an advancement of their wages from the coal owners their respective masters from home. We are under great fear and apprehension of a want of coals for keeping our Keelmen employed and supplying the ships with coals, the consequence whereof is of greatest moment for they on wanting work will be too apt to join those rioters which will make a most formidable body not to be restrained by any civil authority, as hath in these parts been experienced.

We /

We therefore humbly submit it your Grace's consideration whether a military force may not be proper and if so we humbly request of your Grace to promise for as such an order on that behalf as your Grace shall think fit. And it is so please your Grace we with all submission apprehend an unnecessary trouble to the said force may be prevented by enclosing the Order to us with power to forward or detain it as the occasion may require.

And we beg leave to observe to your Grace that as Northumberland and Durham joining upon the River Tyne are out of this jurisdiction, the Commanding officer of the said forces without a power to act by the direction of the Justices of the Peace as well of those Counties as of Newcastle will not, we conceive, execute anything out of the limits of the Town, and so the end of their march hither may be frustrated as has happened heretofore on the like occasion.

We have the honour to be etc.
Cuthbert Fenwick, Mayor.

P.S. The Rioters have now stopped several keels which were carrying coals to the ships, and we have an account that they have also hindered the wagons from loading coals to the River Tyne.

Minutes of the Council of Regency.

S.P.Dom. 36/51.

Letter read from Mr. Fenwicke Mayor of Newcastle giving an account of Riots in those parts and desiring a military force for suppressing them.

Mr. Fenwicke to be acquainted that Orders have been sent on the 19th just for three Companies of Foot to march from Berwick to Newcastle for that purpose.

The Secretary at War was directed to write to the Commanding Officer of the troops at Newcastle to be acceding and assisting to the Magistrates of Northumberland and Durham in case it should be required.

The Secretary at War withdrew.

The Mayor of Newcastle to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/51.

Newcastle upon Tyne

27th June, 1740.

May it please your Grace,

By express of Friday last we presumed to trouble your Grace with an Account of the riotous behaviour of the pit-men employed in the collieries in the neighbourhood of this town; which we beg leave now to inform your Grace is yet continued. And what we then apprehended is also come to pass; the Keelmen have thrown up their work upon the River, come into the town in terrible numbers armed with all sorts of weapons, insulting all the inhabitants and threatening them with entire destruction. Myself and brethren, the magistrates have used our utmost endeavours by arguments, submissions, and at length by raising the posse of the town either to appease the rioters or to defend ourselves and the people of the place; till we should be favoured by your Grace with an Order for soldiers to protect us. Yesterday morning the Rioters were so resolute and audacious as to attack the Guildhall of the town, where myself and other magistrates were assembled for keeping the peace; which soon proved impossible. Stones flew in among us from without through the windows like cannon shot from which our lives were in hazard every moment; and at length the mob broke in upon us in the most terrible outrage. They spared our lives indeed, but obliged us to quit the place then fell to plundering and destroying all about them. The several benches of justice were immediately and entirely demolished, the Town Clerk's Office was broke open, and all the books, deeds, and records of the town and its courts thrown out of the windows amongst the mob without doors; where they were trod underfoot, torn, and most of them lost and the rest defaced and made useless. The town's Public Hutch or Chest was forced and plundered of all the money therein to the amount of about £1400; and many accounts and receipts destroyed; and the whole building of the Guildhall, a large and beautiful fabric was, before noon, rendered almost a perfect ruin. The rioters after all this mischief divided themselves into several bodies consisting of great numbers /

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numbers terrifying the whole town all the day; and in the evening had actually besett a person's house threatening either to burn or pull it down, when, very fortunately, three Companies of Major-Genl. Howard's Regiment, commanded by Captain Sowle came into the town upon their march from Berwick, by whose good care and conduct we have been delivered from the plunder and mischief there was so great reason to apprehend from the rioters in this night. The Captain offers us all assistance in his power either by keeping guard or otherwise consistent with law and the special orders he hath to obey the call of the Justices of Peace for the county of Durham; but has not a sufficient number of men (in case he had particular orders on our behalf) to quell the mob; which though discouraged are not yet dispersed. We therefore once more humbly pray your Grace to obtain for us an Order for some of his Majesty's forces to march to our assistance with all convenient speed; whereby your Grace will greatly increase the pleasure and satisfaction You have been ever known to take in good and gracious acts by preserving the lives and property of great numbers of his Majesty's most loyal subjects and

Your Grace's most obedient and devoted servant
Cuthbert Fenwicke, Mayor.

Minutes of the Council of Regency.

S.P.Dom. 36/51.

July 1, 1740.

A letter was read from Mr. Fenwicke Mayor of Newcastle upon Tyne dated June 27. Giving an account of great riots and tumults that had happened in that town by which much mischief had been already done and desiring that more troops might be ordered to march thither to be assisting to the Civil Magistrates in quelling these disturbances. Also an application from the town of Sunderland, that some troops might be sent thither for suppressing riots. Mr. Arnold (in the absence of the Secretary at War) was called in and delivered a list of the quarters of His Majesty's Troops quartered in North Britain.

Ordered. To write to the Secy. at War that he should immediately send away an express with orders to the Commanding Officers of M. G. Howard's Regt. of Foot at Berwick, to order three Companies of that Regiment to march to Newcastle upon Tyne and another Company of the same Regt. to march to Sunderland with directions to the respective Commanding Officers of the said detachments to be aiding and assisting to the civil magistrates in those places in suppressing riots and preserving the public peace.

The Mayor of Newcastle to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/51.

Newcastle upon Tyne

9th August 1740.

May it please your Grace,

We are truly sensible of the honour your Grace hath been pleased to do this corporation. And are desirous of acknowledging the same with the utmost gratitude. And more particularly your Grace's goodness in obtaining for us the late seasonable relief whereby we have been secured from further tumults and disorders.

We are unwilling to give your Grace any unnecessary trouble but think it our duty to inform you that the trials of our prisoners ended this day when seven were ordered for transportation, their crimes being such, as are not comprehended within the words of the Acts for taking away the Benefit of Clergy. What effect this punishment of Transportation may have upon the great number concerned in the late unhappy affair yet remaining among us we cannot truly judge of for some time for we have great reason to think that the same turbulent spirit still reigns amongst them and (as we think) cannot for some time be kept under but by military forces. We therefore by the continuance of your Grace's favour for the soldiers continuing longer with us.

We further take the liberty to inform your Grace that by a proportionable part of the soldiers being removed to Gateshead which joins to our Bridges, the innkeepers here (as we apprehend) have no just cause of complaint which we have represented to the Secretary at War and desired such directions to the Commanding Officer as shall be necessary therein we hope this will meet with your Grace's approbation which with what you have already done for us will on all occasions oblige us to manifest ourselves as we really are.

Your Grace's
Most Obedient and most Humble Servants
Cuthbert Fenwicke, Mayor.

Case about Rioters at Newcastle-upon-Tyne with the Attorney and Solicitor General's opinion thereupon.

Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

Diverse persons assembled in Newcastle upon Tyne in a riotous manner about three or four o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th day of June last went together to a certain house or chamber in the said Town known as the Town's Chamber wherein was lodged the Town's Hutch or Chest, used for keeping the public money of the Corporation, the said Chamber and Chest with a considerable sum in the same being then both locked up.

The said rioters violently forced or broke open the said door, and after that also the said Chest with a hatchet, iron bars and other instruments and took out of and carried away from the said Hutch all the money therein being the property of the Mayor and Burgesses of the said town.

N.B. The said public money, as the same become payable to the Corporation, is paid into the hands of particular persons called Chamberlains, being eight officers of the said Town annually elected for the purpose. And the said money, as received, is by them lodged in the said Hutch or Chest and therein locked up under nine several locks of different work; so as the key of any one of them cannot open any other of them; and the Mayor and the said Chamberlains share each of them the keeping of one of these keys.

1st Q. Whether the breaking open of the said room and Chest as aforesaid and taking away the money in the day-time be burglary? Or what other species of offence? Or how may the offenders be indicted so as on conviction not to be entitled to the Benefit of Clergy?

2nd Q. Must the indictment necessary charge the money, taken as the Goods and Chattels of the Mayor and Burgesses? Or may it be, for taking such money being in the custody of the said Mayor and Chamberlains?

N.B. Newcastle is a Town and County of itself and all Juries returned from trials there are free burgesses of the same Therefore -

3rd /

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3rd Query. Can such a Jury to be returned for trial of the said offenders on indictment for the breaking open as aforesaid and taking the said Money be legally challenged by reason of the same; being the property of the said Mayor and Burgesses - Or in case the indictment may be for taking the said Money as aforesaid being in the custody of the said Mayor and Chamberlain will that make any and what alteration in the Case?

We are of the opinion that this does not amount to Burglary nor is the nature of the place sufficiently stated so as to enable us to say the offenders will be ousted of their Clergy by the Statute 12 Anne for stealing to the value of 40s. out of any dwelling-house or outhouse thereunto belonging. However, we think it advisable to have one count for stealing out of a dwelling-house or outhouse thereto belonging so as to bring it within the 12 of 2 Anne and another generally for Grand Larceny only and in this particular they must be advised by the Counsel there. The money must be said to be the property of the Corporation, and the dwelling-house must be described either to belong to them or such other person as upon a more exact state of the case the Counsel upon the spot shall advise. We think it will be no cause of challenge that the sheriffs who return the jury are a part of the Corporation but think it will be best to have a jury of non-freemen if it can be had; and if any challenge should prevail, care must be taken to have the offenders continued in custody.

31st July, 1740.

Statement of John Todd of Gateshead, Pitman in Heaton Colliery under Henry Loverick.

Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

On Thursday morning at the time of the night shift going on, Jacob Trothe, Christopher Storey and many others about 60 or 80 in number stopped the gin at the pit he belonged to called the Plain Pit and it was proposed to come to Newcastle to settle the prices of corn and they came together into Newcastle about 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning and soon after went home - but before they parted agreed to meet again upon the Sandhill about 10 o'clock which he and the other pitmen did for the purpose aforesaid and some of them came with an intent to take corn where they could get it, set up in out houses as he apprehended. He continued upon the Sandhill with other Pitmen till about 8 o'clock at night. He saw several quantities of corn brought to Sandhill by the aforesaid Pitmen. He saw several quantities of corn carried into the Cross Keys alehouse by the said pitmen colliers. Friday came to town about 11 or 12 o'clock where were a great number of pitmen upon Sandhill and stayed till about 6 o'clock amongst the crowd upon Sandhill. Heard Robert Rigg make proclamation of the price of corn the pitmen would insist upon, one of the nine persons who delivered a paper to the Mayor about the price of corn and required it to be printed. Saturday, came to town about 11 o'clock and being met near Sandhill by Mr. Ridley and another gentleman on horseback who desired him to go back and see him into a boat or ferry. Yet he returned in the evening about 4 o'clock and went to the house of one Dawson behind the Kale Cross where he drank some ale with Charles Salis, pitman in the said Plain Pit and one George Delvers now a prisoner and as he was returning to Gateshead was stopped at the Bridge Gate by the guard there about 6 o'clock. That when Robert Pigg made proclamation aforesaid he said they would have

Meal at 4d the	beakment
Butter -4d	pound
Cheshire Cheese -2½d	pound
Suffolk Cheese -1½d	pound

That Robert Porter of Gateshead Fell one of the tutors for Philip Turnbull's children delivered him a paper containing the prices for the provisions above mentioned which was writ by a holdman and which he delivered to Mr. Mayor. Two free Porters can speak as to him.

Announcement of the Prices of Corn as agreed to sell on
occasion of the Riot in June 1740.

Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

This is to give notice that all persons who have any
corn to sell have agreed to sell the same at the following
prices, viz.

	S	D
Wheat the bushel	4	0
Rye	3	0
Oats	1	6

And that all persons from whom any corn has been taken
may have the same returned to them.

Captain Sowle to the Mayor and Corporation of Newcastle.

Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

Newcastle upon Tyne

2nd July, 1740.

Gentlemen,

The late instance of the ill consequences attending popular tumults makes it needless to set forth the reasons for continuing a guard and in as much as since all freemen have been at any trouble therein we have put that duty only upon the inhabitants not free. We desire that you will appoint men for your Company fit and willing to do the service for this night and that you will this day return to us a list of all men belonging to your company fit and able to do such service and we shall from time to time as occasion requires inform you of the number we at any time want and when they should attend.

E. Sowle.

Advertisement

June 24, 1740.

Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

As the low prices of corn at Newcastle have brought country people from far places to buy up the corn there whereby none should be left to supply the inhabitants and persons employed in the coal works upon the River Tyne, Notice therefore is hereby given that corn will not be delivered to any person unknown without a certificate weekly in writing from a Fitter, Staithman, Ton Tail Man or Churchwarden of the Parish expressing the quantity necessary to be so delivered.

Brief for King against Rioters Assizes 1741.

Newcastle Guildhall Archives.

Edward Humphrey
als. UmfreyBenjamin Curry
Richard Thompson)
James Guttery)to prisoner's putting
his hand in the Hutch.
who took guns used in
prisoner's possession.

Ann Martin Spr.

Thomas Taylor
Benjamin Currywho saw prisoner put
hand into the Hutch.
saw prisoner near
the Hutch.John Prudhoats
als. PrudhoeRobert Softley
Michael TurnerTo prisoners breaking
open the Guildhall
and behaving in a very
outrageous manner.
To prisoners con-
cealing himself in
the house of John
Armstrong and upon
being found and
searched a book (be-
longing to the Cor-
poration) was found
concealed in his
breast.William Levinton
als. Living stoneThomas Aubone
Robert PattonThe like evidence
as Michl. Turner.
To prisoners brandish-
ing a stick amongst
the rioters on the
Sandhill.

Blyth Adamson

To his insisting
rioters and he or
some with him saying
aloud, "The King is
gone over the sea
with Money that we
want"

William Spargeon

To prisoners being
amongst rioters and
forcing a drum from
Alex. Kitching one
of

		of the town's drummers.
	George Davison	Saw prisoner amongst rioters.
William Hutchinson	Edward Gill	To prisoners throwing stones at the windows of the Guildhall.
William Knox	William Charlton } Alexander Jorlson }	To prisoners throwing papers, tables, and other things out of the windows, tables, benches in the Guild- hall, Mayor's Chamber and breaking the presses in the little room with an iron bar.
Agnes Buchanan	Barbarn Pope	To prisoner confessing the taking part of a large looking glass and a bag with books.
Thomas Alman or Almon or Almond	Mr. Joseph Reed } Mark White } William Waugh }	To prisoners being amongst rioters and blowing a horn.
Patrick als. Peter Bruce	Moody Briggs	Saw prisoner amongst the rioters and blowing a horn.
Edward Armstrong	James Baird	Saw prisoner amongst the rioters and breaking windows.
William Gardiner	John Robson } William Barker }	Saw prisoner amongst the rioters knocking down several gentlemen and particularly Mr. Lancelot Trumble.
David Wilson	Mr. John Ord	
Duncan /		

Duncan Macfarlane	Cuthbert Fenwicke, Esq.	
James Dykes	Thomas Cuthbertson	To prisoners breaking the Guildhall windows and pulling iron bars thereout.
David Turner	Blyth Adamson Alex. Wilson	Saw prisoner amongst the rioters. Saw prisoner amongst the rioters carrying a colour.
James Cooke	Alex. Wilson Martha Leviston	Saw prisoner amongst rioters beating a drum. The like evidence.
James Dykes	Thomas Cuthbertson	The same as in former indictment against him.
James Scott	Joseph Johnson Joseph Swerbo Anthony Nasesmith	Took goods in prisoner's possession. Dead. A prisoner discharged and since fled.

Sir W. Williamson Bart., to the Bishop of Durham at London.

S.P.Dom. 36/50.

Montswearmouth

May 24th, 1740.

My Lord,

Last night I got home very much tired with my illness and journey. This morning I sent a servant to Durham for intelligence about the Stockton affair concerning which I wrote last night. My man is now returned and brought me the enclosed letter which I choose to send rather than abridge.

You will find upon perusal that several persons were taken up but let go again upon promise of being quiet, but I rather believe the gentlemen were in no condition to force them away and I presume my friend Hedworth so near a new election would not be overforward to think of soldiers.

My man tells me he hears at Durham that after the gentlemen were gone that they again gathered and were up all last night and that the people of Yarm a market town in Yorkshire arose too and that they are joined by the people of Norton, Billingham and Wooston, three considerable towns in the neighbourhood of Stockton, my man adds that though no men appear amongst them yet that there are a great many prepared to back them (as he expresses it) armed with guns and swords they do no harm to anybody but swear they will die before any corn shall be exported for that they had better be killed or hanged than starved.

I cannot help adding the very indifferent crop last year (for so it was in all these northern parts) the severe winter following and the melancholy prospect we have of any crop this spring are things that greatly affect everybody but especially the labouring part of mankind. Wheat, my servant told me, is this day at Durham 6 shillings a bushell and oats 2s.6d. a bushell and to add to these the embargo and these north east winds have almost destroyed our trade. The Collector at Sunderland told me about three weeks or a month ago that the Custom House books were then 500 ships less /

less in number (had had been cleared) than they were usually at that time of the year.

These circumstances falling out together makes the county very disturbed. The Bailiff of Stockton tells me the merchants of Stockton have all their granaries full of corn and to be sure it will be a loss to them if they do not sell it at the high price. This is all I can inform your Lordship of at present. If I grow no worse (for I am now taking medicine) and if there be any recession I shall endeavour to go to Durham and Stockton too if any method can be found out whereby we may use compulsion legally and be protected against the consequences that may attend bloodshed if legally and be protected against the consequences that may attend bloodshed if that misfortune should happen. And yet I am of opinion that no transitory visit though we should be able to take some prisoners away and bring them to Jaol would answer the end for I think it must be some armed power that is permanent with them in the town for some time, for you will observe how much they promised and no sooner were the gentlemen gone they were up the same night again. I shall be glad to have your Lordship's directions for I would do right if I knew what was so

I am etc.

W. Williamson.

General Birrell's Regiment of Foot is at York which is but about 30 miles from Stockton. I hear two of the women ringleaders of the mob are called Admiral Vernon and Admiral Haddock.

Sir W. Williamson Bart., to the Bishop of Durham.

S.P.Dom. 36/51.

Durham Castle,

June 10th, 1740.

My Lord,

I have work brought to me from Mr. Johnson. My undersheriff would speak with me; upon his coming up he delivered me a letter from Mr. Johnson who told me in it that the people of Stockton and thereabouts were up to hinder the exportation of corn to the number of about 3000 and that they had sent for the colliers of Elderly and Caterthorn which are computed at 6 or 800 men who were expected to join them this day and enclosed in the same letter was a warrant directed to me and my undersheriff signed George Vane and Thomas Davison setting forth that though the proclamation had been read yet the riot was continued and that an officer (I suppose a military one) refused to act without the assistance of the Civil Power and that command and therefore I and my undersheriff are by those two Justices commanded to raise the posse comitatus. After this weak state and all in a sweat as I was I thought it no time to lie in bed but ordered my coach (and by good luck it was low water so that my coach got safe over) when I came to Durham. I found Mr. Hedworth and Mr. Bowes at Mr. Rudd the lawyers. There we argued the whole matter over with some warmth. I told them weak as I was (for I can walk but badly having by my last illness lost my strength) I was come to Durham (as the centre of my County) to receive the Justices' commands but they said they would give me no commands. Well, says I, but if my warrant from Messrs. Vane and Davison is good I will obey it and issue out my precepts to the chief constables commanding them to issue out their warrants to the petty constables to command all persons from fifteen to sixty to attend me at Sedgfield on Friday next between the hours of 5 and 7 in the morning in order to march to Stockton. Now, says I, the Consequence of this must be either I shall find a mob, or none; if the first I will order the proclamation to be read and if they continued together a good deal beyond the hour I will by me people endeavour to apprehend as many as I can have information against /

against but if in this I am opposed what can I do. I will avoid bloodshed (if possible) but in that case I fear it will come to a general battle and those who or how many may be killed or wounded God only knows, but if it should prove better that no mob should appear (whilst I am sure that the people are quiet; what have I or my people to do, or what can I do except take some few persons against whom informations are made, if the latter should happen, what then. I know nothing but to march back again to Sedgefield and there thank those who are so good as to attend my summons, and if should rise again I could not help it for as I had no money to subsist so great a number as I hoped would come how could I obtain people who had neither meat nor drink nor no accommodation. Mr. Rudd to use his own words said it was his opinion that the Posse was by no means an adequate remedy but it must be some permanent force and not a temporary one as the Posse was; it seemed to be agreed by all that sending only one company of soldiers being 70 at the most would and did only irritate them and had made them much more violent not being a number sufficient to cause fear, and I hear hardly any of the officers dare appear but to conclude the whole Mr. Bowers declaring his abhorrence of shedding blood as did Mr. Hedworth it was proposed and agreed that they two should go this night (which they did) the one to Mr. Davies the other to Davison and send over for the three merchants who have caused all this mischief two of their names I remember who are Sutton and Barker; the third I have forgot and try if they can prevail with them to desist from loading French ships with corn (for this is the sole cause of the riot) and it was consented to by all them present that if this could be attained the people would be satisfied and quiet, these two gentlemen this evening gone over to this end (and I heartily wish them success) and tomorrow they intend to go to Stockton to try by peaceable means to end this matter but if the merchants should be obstinate God only knows the end of this matter however that no blame may fall on me I have ordered out my precept to raise the posse against Friday next at which time if I am alive and able you shall from

My Lord etc.

W. Williamson.

Sir W. Williamson to the Bishop of Durham.

S.P.Dom. 36/51.

Monkwearmouth

Sunday June 15th, 1740.

My Lord,

I should not have chosen this day to have wrote to you but as I promised in my last to give you an account of our success at Stockton on Friday last being the 13th Instant but could not because it was near 10 at night before I got to Durham and the post gone. I now sit down to acquaint you with what happened from the time of writing my last to this day. Mr. Hedworth and Mr. Bowes insisted on it that when I came here their power ceased, and that if necessity required it I was to give the orders for firing. I said I differed in opinion for that my office was ministerial only but that the Justices were the proper persons for in obedience to their warrant I had raised the County and that I was to be commanded by them. However I talked the matter over with them before Mr. Rudd and he was of my judgment. I waited on Mr. Gyll and he said the power (by the words of the Act) were in the Justices or the Sheriff and he would not advise me to take it upon me. I talked it with Mr. Gowland he was of the same judgment; Mr. Johnson drew up a case with queries for Mr. Rudd's opinion what he answered to relating to the giving orders to fire. He expressed thus that it was too delicate a part for him to determine but he told me by word of mouth twice that if he was in my case he would not give orders to fire but Mr. Hedworth and Mr. Bowes differing with me though thus advised by lawyers put me into strange doubts. I would willingly have done what was right but the thoughts of shedding blood as being tried for it to me I own was terrible, but before Mr. Bowes and I left Mr. Rudd being much averse to the giving the orders to fire I said to let you see I will go as far as any of you; if you Mr. Bowes, Mr. Hedworth and the other justices will sign such an order I will join with you in it but I will not do it alone and thus we parted. Next morning being Friday I was awake about two and got out of bed at three and was in my coach at four, having appointed the Posse to meet me at Sedgfield between five and seven in the morning. I /

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I took my undersheriff into my coach. I had only Mr. Bates (who desired to go with me because I thought I should want somebody to give out my orders) and a servant with me, and very few appeared till I got to Sedgefield. As soon I as came there I heard a horn blow and a mob at the end of the town who insulted all the people as they came in, whilst I stayed there (expecting company) Messrs. Bowes and Hedworth joined me, and a Mr. Surtees of Hensforth; those were all the Justices that joined me, except Mr. Vane who met me on the road to Stockton. Just before we came away Mr. Bowes desired that I would make a speech to the people to inform them what I was going about for says he; I believe most of them are against us, against the exportation of Corn and Mr. Hedworth and I have resolved (as the merchants of Stockton have deposited 1000 bushells of wheat which shall be delivered to the poor at 4 shillings a bushel) that we too will lodge 600 bushells in a granary at Stockton, to be sold at the same price and pray acquaint them with this, as soon as I came down Mr. Bowes, Hedworth and I went upon a high piece of ground about 200 people gathering round us, I commanded silence and talked to them as long as I was able (for I was very ill and have been so above a month and so weak I could hardly walk) then Mr. Hedworth spoke and after that Mr. Bowes and then I told them that they had heard the true causes of giving them that trouble and therefore I hoped and commanded them in the King's name to attend me and assist me in executing the commands I had received which tended only to preserve the peace and every man in quiet possession of his property several behind me said, for this end we are come and we will stand by you. Some, nay most, of the best people of Stockton came to me to Sedgefield and upon talking with them they spoke of great doubt and difficulties I should meet with and they generally seemed to think I should not be able to get any prisoners taken or get the corn shipped. Only one or two were of a different opinion, but they complained greatly of the fears they were in and seemed in a great consternation for they feared every night to have their houses robbed or burnt, and with a great deal of warmth said they had nothing they could call their own nay their very lives were in danger. As we went on to Stockton our numbers increased. I sent a bailiff before to see what numbers were got together, if they would let me into the town. Messrs. Bowes and Hedworth desired they might be in the town a good while before me and so went on before and I followed slowly. My bailiff returned and told me I might without any interruption go to the Inn; when we came to the town the bells rung and going further I met Bowes and Hedworth who told me that /

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that soldiers were drawn up. As soon as I came up to them I got out of my coach and complimented the officers and received the military salute from them. The Captain told me he and his people were at my command and that they should fire if I would give orders. I told him I hoped there would be no occasion. He said he thought I had brought power enough with me. Well, the Justices granted warrants against several. I sent out my bailiffs assisted by constables but most of the chief offenders were hid or gone over the water to Yorkshire. We took seven prisoners, two women and firemen, and the corn which was about 1,200 bushells was shipped which was the whole quantity then insisted on. About half an hour after four in the afternoon, I set out to return the cart with the prisoners went first then followed about twenty soldiers with the officer, then my coach attended with about 500 men of the Posse. Thus we marched till we had got about two miles beyond Stockton, and then I got out of my coach, thanked the officer and gave the soldiers a guinea to drink and went on in a long trot to Sedgfield where we found all the people out at their doors, but not one word spoke against us as we went on in company insensibly beyond so that when I came within four miles of Durham I had but about twenty people with me. I then went first and ordered Mr. Goddard to keep with the prisoners and his people about a quarter of a mile behind, being assured by my under sheriff that there was no danger in Durham. As we went down Elvett the people were out on both sides the way and they made noise. Mr. Johnson told me the people cursed me; however, I went on the when I came into the market place all was quiet and so I drove up quietly to the Green and there Mrs. Johnson pressed me to stay and sup with her. I had not been above quarter of an hour there just, spent with my illness and labour but I heard a great shout; in came Mr. Goddard who told me the people in Elvett had flung stones and almost murdered them that coming over the bridge his mare was knocked down and when he got up he knocked a man down, that the chief bailiff was almost killed and that two of the seven prisoners were rescued at the very gaol doors but five were in prison. My Lord, I am so jaded I can write no more; the spirit of rebellion is spread over the County and the small appearance at the Posse with the murmurs of those that attended considering how many neglected to come (for I do not believe I had every 20th man) will put it out of anybody's power to raise any number again, for those that did come are only laughed at by those that stay at home but sure, my Lord, this evil ought to be remedied or farewell the power of the sheriff /

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sheriff in any emergency, but this must be matter of another consideration. I can say no more now than that their number howsoever ridiculed (before I came) were above 3000 and as a sensible person told me he thought we were about 2000 though they were magnified by some to be above 3000.

What I can more add (thro' weakness) is that the enclosed I received from the merchants of Stockton who desired me to send them to you in hopes you will lay their case before the Regency and endeavour to relieve them in such manner as to you shall seem best I hear an uproar was expected at Durham yesterday but when I came away I sent my coach through the market place and walked on foot and this was about half an hour past ten and all was then quiet. The talk is the people at Sunderland will rise to - I can add no more than that I am

Your Lordships most obedient and humble servant,
W. Williamson.

The Petition of the Weavers of the South-West (1718)

S.P.Dom. 35/14.

To the King's most excellent Majesty
in Council

The Humble Petition of your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects the poor distressed weavers whose names are hereunto subscribed on behalf of themselves and many thousands of their oppressed brethren residing in your Majesty's counties of Wiltshire and Somerset.

Humbly sheweth

That your Petitioners' Masters the broad clothiers residing within the aforesaid counties by an oppressive combination amongst themselves for several years past have reduced your poor Petitioners, their brethren and families to the utmost necessity, want and despair. First, by lengthening their warping barrs from twelve Quarters and three inches to fourteen Quarters and upwards, by which means your poor Petitioners and their Brethren have been compelled to weave three yards and an half for three yards contrary to law, usage and custom from time immemorial; and in the next place by making illegal and arbitrary deductions out of your poor Petitioners wages upon frivolous pretences of damages; who upon full hearing and your poor Petitioners complaints and all that could be objected against them by their said masters have given judgement in favour of your poor Petitioners; notwithstanding which legal determinations your Petitioners' masters have commenced vexatious suits at law against your Petitioners on account of their said pretended damages before heard and determined by your said Justices of the Peace, by which means some of your poor distressed Petitioners have been intimidated and forced from their families and habitations to avoid being carried to a jail or to pay back to their masters with cost the money that had been already adjudged them by such Justices as their wages, so that your Petitioners and their brethren languishing under such oppression are many of them driven to utmost despair and obliged to leave their families in misery, and some of our brethren having of late unlawfully assembled themselves together with no other view but to seek redress and relief; the whole body of the weavers (as your Petitioners are informed) have been falsely /

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falsely represented to your Majesty by the clothiers as enemies to your Sacred Majesty, your Person and Government, and favourers of a Popish Pretender.

We therefore your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, having seen many instances of your Majesty's great clemency and mercy even to rebels and traitors, beg leave to throw ourselves at your Majesty's mercy and pardon towards us your poor Petitioners and our brethren and that your Majesty would be graciously pleased to commend to your Parliament the deplorable circumstances and miseries your poor Petitioners and their Brethren to support themselves and families, and your Petitioners (as in duty bound) shall not only pray to Almighty God for your Majesty's long life and rule and reign over us, but shall also upon all occasions be ready and willing to sacrifice even our lives in the service and defence of your Majesty's Royal Person, Family, and Government against all your enemies open and private.

J. Cooper J.P. to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 35/63.

To the Most Noble Thomas Duke of Newcastle one of his Majesty's Principal Secretary of State.

May it please Your Grace,

The underwritten John Cooper of Trowbridge in the County of Wiltshire one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said County begs leave here to represent to your Grace that a disorderly Company of Weavers about seven hundred in number has been roving about some parts of this County. The first notice I had of them was on Thursday night being 22nd of this Inst. Novembr. that they were then at Bradford upon which I sent to the Justice acting in the Division to meet me there the next day but some being from home and others ill no body appeared; I came there in the morning by nine of the clock, and taking the Constables and thirty other persons to my assistance went out to the rioters and demanded the reasons of their assembling themselves to the terror of the town and country. They declared they were under great oppression from their masters the clothiers who had enlarged their bars from 12 Qtrs to 13½ and 14 Quarters, so that they did weave four and five yards on every piece of cloth for nothing; upon which I sent for the clothiers who could not deny but the weavers allegation was true in many cases. I then told them it would be difficult to keep people quiet under so great oppression; upon which they unanimously resolved to take in their bars. I then told the weavers the bars were all to be taken in, and strict justice should be done them if they would seek for it in a legal manner; and if they did not immediately depart to their habitations, would read the Proclamation upon which they declared they was satisfied, and immediately dispersed, and the Town of Bradford has been quiet ever since. They appeared to me about eight hundred, armed only with sticks, being a band of half-starved wretches. The next day about thirty began to appear here on the same account, but I told them the Justices designed to meet very speedily on the grievance they separated. But being from home the next day to consult with any brethren to put a stop to these proceedings, they assembled again and broke several bars which they said was unjust and the windows of two houses, but in the evening when I came here, they was all gone, and the Town /

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Town has been quiet. If they make any new insurrection that the magistrates can't curb Dragoons may be necessary, and this town is capable of receiving them and no burden to the inhabitants.

I deferred transmitting this notice to your Grace until I had fully heard both clothiers and weavers and was capable of sending a perfect account of the whole riot. I shall in pursuance of my duty to His Majesty take the best method to preserve the peace of this Division that is under my care; and my brethren who act with me have appointed tomorrow to consider of proper regulations to prevent any new attempts. I beg your Grace to believe that I am with the profoundest duty

May it please your Grace
I am etc.

Trowbridge, John Cooper.
November 28th, 1726.

This moment I hear there is 1000 weavers assembled at Frome in Somersetshire on the same account, and that the clothiers are determined to give them such terms as will make them easy.

Col. C. A. Powlett to J. Cooper Esq. J.P.

S.P.Dom. 35/63.

Sir,

I had the favour of your of the 27th. We have been all very quiet here, but least any accident should happen I have told the neighbouring Justices here I thought the best method to prevent any future disturbance was, to get a Sessions and call a sufficient number together of the head clothiers and some of the ringleaders of the weavers and hear them fairly and at the same time promise the weavers that if they were oppressed they would petition the Parliament to redress their grievances if they themselves could not satisfy them. They are all come willingly into it and Tuesday the third of next month is appointed for a Sessions at Wells in this County. I shall attend and send you up a particular account of the result of that meeting and am with great respect

Sir etc.

Charles A. Powlett.

Frome Dec. the 3rd.

Four Justices of Wiltshire to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 35/63.

Trowbridge, December 17th, 1726.

May it please Your Grace,

We the underwritten Justices of the Peace acting within the Division of Trowbridge in this County of Wiltshire do humbly certify to your Grace that though the disorderly weavers who have committed violences and outrages on the persons and properties of several of His Majesty's subjects are set to work, yet we conceive 'tis absolutely necessary to make a show of their leaders' examples of public justice to deter others from the like outrages. But we think it most conducive to the public peace to defer apprehending them till after the holidays that their fury might abate.

We have two troops of Brigadier Honeywood's Dragoons in this Town and Westbury (which are very useful) under the command of Major Sucklyn, who informs us that he had orders to march to Newbury; which we conceive may be of ill consequence to the public peace and will certainly occasion new disturbances if they are withdrawn at this juncture before the leaders of these riots are apprehended and committed. Therefore we have desired the said Major to forbear making away until we had laid this representation before your Grace, desiring they may not march before other troops are ordered in their room.

We are, etc.

H. Cowlett,
John Cooper,
John Phipps,
Thomas Phipps.

First Report of G. Earle to Viscount Townshend.

S.P.Dom. 35/63.

Trowbridge 26 December 1726.

My Lord,

I got to this place last night, where I soon found people ready on both sides the question to inform me of the tumults which have been committed in this country and what they proceeded from. I find it agreed on all hands that these miserable weavers have been oppressed by the clothiers; the articles on which they make their complaint are chiefly three. The first and most material is that the clothiers by making their bars too long make these poor wretches weave 35 or 36 yards of cloth and pay them but for 30. The next is some of the clothiers, when they deliver out work by weight, have made weights on purpose of 17 ounces to the pound whereas avoirdupois is but 16 ounces. The last is they would be paid 16d a yard for weaving the superfine cloth, 14 for the second and 12 for the coarse; this is the price which many clothiers pay and which is but a bare subsistence with hard labour, whereas others in a deed time of work will grind down these poor creatures to 15d; 14d and 11d. It is my humble opinion these are the causes of the late riots, and that they did not proceed in the least from a spirit of Jacobitism and I do not believe any person will give it that turn unless he has been an oppressor of these poor people, for I had many of the chief of them with me last night and I think them without disguise very hearty and zealous in the interest of the Government; and this is generally the opinion of this county. I find all the damage they have done does not amount to thirty pounds. There is one of these rioters now in Salisbury Jail and another I hear was sent from Frome to Winchester Jail. In my opinion it would be better for both these to be bailed out, for as these people now are quiet, in good temper, and willing to submit to anything, I should think it a right time to oblige them with the release of these fellows, but here are some angry and revengeful people who think that all authority consists in punishment; it is my humble opinion a little share of prudence in the governing part of this country would keep it in perfect tranquillity without the assistance of troops, and in order to it I will now inform your Lordship what steps I have taken. Last night upon my arrival /

arrival, I waited upon Mr. John Cooper a Justice of the Peace for the County and, though he is a clothier and deals very largely, yet he is of opinion that solely from oppression these riots began, he is an honest man much in the interest of the Government and by his just dealings has great credit with the poor. I know not a fitter man for your Lordship to send you commands to in this County. When I returned to my lodgings I sent for the most considerable weavers in the town; I told them I had enquired into their complaints and found some of them to be just, but that they had taken a vile method to right themselves. They seemed sorry for what had been done; I told them care would be taken to have their grievances redressed, that the King himself had been so gracious to enquire whether they were not oppressed and that if they were so poor as not to be able to send up four or five of their company to procure a Bill they would be assisted in it. Upon the whole they seemed perfectly satisfied and did signify that not the least disturbance whatsoever should happen in these parts, begged that the troops might be immediately withdrawn, that their obedience might not be imputed to their fear of them and this morning early they set out for Bradford, Melkham, Frome and Westbury to tell their companions what they have engaged for them. I purpose to be at Frome this night, and if I find my stay in these parts no longer necessary, I shall go home where if your Lordship honours me with any further commands, let them be directed for me near Malmesbury, by Highworth Bay, Wiltshire

I am etc.

G. Earle.

Since I writ this letter I had some clothiers with me. They say these people ought to be punished for what they have done, that there is no taking their word, and that till some of them are hanged the country will never be at quiet. I think quite different from them but your Lordship is the best judge.

Second Report of G. Earle to Viscount Townshend.

S.P.Dom. 35/63.

Eastcourt near Malmesbury.

28 Decr. 1726.

My Lord,

So soon as I had finished my letter I had the honour to write to your Lordship from Trowbridge the 26th inst., I set out for Frome, but made Westbury on my way. There I spoke with the Messrs. Phipps two brothers eminent clothiers who live near that town; they are Justices of the Peace and sent that fellow to Salisbury Jail whom I mentioned to your Lordship in my last. They told me everything was quiet about them, that the weavers had never joined with the rioters, that they opposed those who came from Trowbridge and Bradford, that they had just then received a Petition from the fellows they had sent to jail and were inclinable to shew him favour, as being what they thought would add to the quieting the minds of the mobs. I told them I was entirely of their opinion and so left them. I got to Frome about eight the same night and without speaking to any person whatsoever. I immediately waited upon Colonel Powlett who commands the Dragoons who are in that town, who received me very coolly, asked me who I was, from whence and from whom I came, to all which I made him direct answer, wondered I had no letter from your Lordship to him and thought as he had been there some time he was as fit a person to have obeyed any commands of your Lordship as any one you could find. He was then at a clothier's where he said was a good deal of company so could not ask me to go in, but that he should soon be at his quarters where I might speak with him if I had my commands. I left him with a design to go to bed being much fatigued, but soon after the Colonel sent an officer to me to know if I had any commands for him. I told him none nor did I know he was in that town till I came into that country; this gentleman left me soon after the Colonel came and with him an officer who knew me; the Colonel said just then some clothiers had been with him and were surprised I should have with me some weavers of that town the most notorious rioters and had examined them against the clothiers without hearing the clothiers. I told him it was /

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was entirely false, that I had neither sent for, seen, or spoke with any person since I got there, he stayed with me near an hour; we talked over matters with great calmness. He said the troops had been much insulted that it was a Jacobite place, and did believe the clothiers houses would be destroyed were the troops to be withdrawn and that then he had an order in his pocket from the Justices to fire ball in case more than twenty should come to the town in a riotous manner. I asked whether the clothiers had done justice. He said he could not say they had, for though they had shortened their bars, they had sunk their price a penny a yard. I told him I thought there might be as many Jacobite clothiers as Jacobite mob, who in this juncture did hardships in order to create confusion; besides many well-meaning people might think it a fine thing to have the troops at their beck to defend their hardships upon others without considering what effect it had upon our property at home and our credit abroad, that I was thoroughly convinced if the clothiers would do as well-wishers to peace and quietness and the Justices would take care and exert themselves there would be no occasion for troops to keep that country in order, that I was sure the service which would be best taken by His Majesty and His Ministry would be to make up matters amicably between the clothiers and weavers, and to destroy mobbing by quieting the minds of the people; the Colonel said he did design in a few days to get as many Justices together as he could, and to summon some clothiers and the heads of the weavers and endeavour to moderate between them. I told him I thought it perfectly right and that I did not at all doubt but with prudent management it would have a good effect. The Colonel asked me if I would stay the next day; I told him no for from my different way of thinking from those in power there, it might make an odd jumble; it might draw people together, it might do harm and could do no good. I took my leave of him and the next morning I left the town without speaking to any person belonging to it; If what I have done is approved by your Lordship I shall think my self most happy; if it is not, my only excuse is I had a good will but a bad judgment, and as I had no particular directions from your Lordship my own opinion, poor as it is, was my only guidance and that I have not departed from.

I am etc.
G. Earle.

I have almost forgot to inform your Lordship of one great spring to all these disorders the latter end of the last sessions of Parliament the clothiers in that country had a design to procure an Act for incorporating themselves exclusive of the weavers; this they think a great privilege, which whenever is attempted again will cause the same disorders.

Third Report of G. Earle to Viscount Townshend

S.P.Dom. 35/63

Eastcourt 31st Decm. 1726.

My Lord,

Between six and seven o'clock this morning I received by Mr. Avison the Messenger, the honour of your Lordship's letter of the 29th inst. I think myself extremely happy that what I have done is approved of my His Majesty my royal master, for whose sake for ten thousand reasons I ought to lay down my life when his service requires it. Here enclosed I have sent to you by the post Wednesday last, least the original should have miscarried. I do believe the fellow in Salisbury Jail was bailed last Wednesday, but I fancy your Lordship is of opinion upon the receipt of my second letter that the fellow in Ilchester Jail would not have been bailed by the Justices of Somersetshire for ought I could have said to them, if an answer to my last letter is of any moment. I dare say I shall receive your Lordship's commands upon it by Monday's post, which shall be most faithfully and punctually obeyed by me; if I receive no answer by Monday's post, I will then send to Mr. Cooper of Trowbridge His Majesty's pleasure in relation to the bailing the prisoners, and desire him to inform the Justices of Somersetshire therewith, he being in that neighbourhood and acquainted with many of them; as to these weavers petitioning His Majesty, somebody must be appointed to draw up their hardships and to see what proof they have for them, for there's scarce any among them can write or read, and any person that can in that country who is not a weaver will be unwilling to disoblige the clothiers for the sake of justice only.

I am etc.
G. Earle.

First Report of G. Vaughan to Viscount Townshend.

S.P.Dom. 35/63.

Bath. December 31st, 1726.

My Lord,

In obedience to your Lordship's commands, I have made the best enquiry I can into the affair of the weavers, which I find to be (as I told your Lordship) entirely owing to the oppression of their masters; the weavers did at first apply themselves by complaints to the magistrates and gentlemen, and they being apprehensive that the poor weavers and their families would become chargeable to their respective parishes, seemed to encourage them in their complaints; but took no step to redress their grievances; and at first overlooked some small outrages: this indolence in the magistrates animated the weavers to assemble in greater numbers, and I must observe to your Lordship that among the mobs that have been of late, abundance of common people not weavers have joined in them, wafe vagrants and travellers and other idle people who have pillaged several houses. Assembling in the towns where they are, it will be impossible for them to prevent mobs in the villages and parishes where there is no accommodation for the troops; I cannot help saying that there is an appearance of something like disloyalty among them, many gentlemen in this country are named as countenancers of them, particularly one Mr. Webb of Mountain Farly near Bradford. He is a gentleman of a great estate and a stickler among the Tories; I am told but not from any good hands that this gentleman does privately encourage them, and I was offered by a weaver to be carried to him to hear the cause of the weavers from his own mouth; I understand he is left out of the Commission of the Peace which he was formerly in, and having married his only daughter to Sir Edward Seymour's eldest son he is in great esteem among his party. I have discovered many clothiers who are fair traders having statutable bars and they seem to take part with the weavers and say that the clothiers who are now disciplined by the mob have for several years undersold them at market; I took a lawyer, who is a man of business and knows the country with me and we went about among many of the clothiers and weavers, and find they were all ready and willing to come to a petition to His Majesty praying relief. My friend and I drew /

drew a rough draft of a petition and read it to several of them and they heartily approved of it, a copy of which I here enclose to your Lordship, and if your Lordship approves of it, and is pleased to send me your commands, I am promised to be favoured with as much good company to sign it as I can wish for, both clothiers and weavers. They were up on Tuesday night last in and about Milsam and on Thursday night last they were with one Mr. Townshend a clothier at Calne who gave them fair words and promised to conform to statutable bars, and gave them some drink whereupon they left him without doing him any damage. Yesterday they assembled in very great numbers in and about Bradford with a design to march in a body of 2000 from thence to Salisbury to release thence a brother that is committed there. They grew very numerous and troublesome, in so much that a troop of Colonel Churchill's Dragoons quartered at Bradford were forced to mount to disperse them. They continued very turbulent all day yesterday and last night, and growing more numerous, and this day though the officers and soldiers had shown the utmost temper in endeavouring to dissuade and disperse them, the mob began to grow mischievous and then the Dragoons fell upon and wounded abundance of them, and have taken about twenty prisoners. The country for three miles around Bradford is in the utmost confusion and the weavers are all retired to the woods. The Dragoons have dispersed them and drove out of Bradford, but I fear they have not suppressed them for many of them were this day heard to complain of the cruelty of their masters in sending for troops to murder them if they would not submit to starve, and some other bitter invectives against the Government which confirms one in the necessity of bringing them to temper some milder way that if there be any incendiaries among them or that have spirited them up to these riots, the Government may have the merit of setting all disputes right and an opportunity of punishing the incendiaries. I lodge at one Mr. Merchant's in the Abbey Green at Bath where I shall be glad to receive your Lordship's commands being with the greatest duty etc.

G. Vaughan.

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People of great credit if not the greatest among the weavers are

Mr. Long and Mr Wilson at Trowbridge.

Mr. Meyrick and Mr. Mills at Milsam.

Mr. Tarrant and Mr. Methuen at Bradford
and N. Webb Esq. of Mountain Farley.

Mr. Montague, Mr. Norris and Mr. Cooper, Justices of the
Peace in Wiltshire.

Viscount Townshend to G. Vaughan.

S.P.Dom. 35/64.

Whitehall

January 2nd 1726/7.

Sir,

I have received yours of the last of Decr. and have laid it before the King who approved of your enquiries and observations with respect to the weavers. He was much concerned to see that the riotous proceedings continued to be so turbulent that the civil magistrates being not able to quell them the troops were obliged to use force. His Majesty who is always desirous that the mildest ways should be used to quiet these disturbances, thinks that a petition of the nature of that you have transmitted a draft of would be a very proper and reasonable, and when the King who has a great compassion for the hardships and sufferings of any of his subjects, should receive such an Humble Petition, from the weavers, and find that these people return to their obedience to the civil magistrates, His Majesty would take their case into his royal consideration, and the parliament being now to meet in a short time, by an application there likewise they would get certainly a speedy and solid redress to all their grievances; if therefore the principal of them will apply by a dutiful petition to His Majesty provided all riotous proceedings cease in the mean time. They need not doubt but that His Majesty will give them all the relief that shall appear just and necessary.

I am, etc.

Townshend

P.S. I have had a letter put into my hands of 31 Dembr. from Col. Powlett at Frome who mentions no disturbance but says all is quiet and adds that a session was to be held the 3d inst. at Wells where the head clothiers and the chief of the weavers would be heard, and a petition agreed on to Parliament to redress grievances if the weavers were not satisfied with what the clothiers should offer.

Viscount Townshend to G. Vaughan Esq.

S.P.Dom. 35/64.

Whitehall

4 Jany. 1726/7.

Sir,

I wrote to you the 2nd Inst. and sent you His Majesty's orders upon what you proposed in relation to the weavers petitioning; since which I have received yours of the same date, which gave His Majesty a fresh concern to see that the riot not only continued but also that the people seemed to be more and more exasperated; the King is very desirous to have such extremities prevented, and for that purpose would have the grievances of the weavers well examined into; I have likewise wrote to Mr. Earle by the King's command upon this subject who will forward this to you, and let you know where you shall meet him to concert matters for performing what His Majesty desires.

I am, etc.
Townshend.

Mr. Vaughan.

J. Cooper Esq. J.P. to G. Earle Esq.

S.P.Dom. 35/64.

Trowbridge, January 4th, 1726.

Sir,

Your favour came to my hands yesterday in the afternoon and I cannot easily express the good effect your coming into these parts had on the weavers, who declared to me since they would endure any hardships rather than give disturbances and submit their case to the Parliament, provided they could be forgiven for what has passed. I told them if their future behaviour merited favour I would not give directions for apprehending them, and would persuade the other Justices to do the same; upon which they replied they would never give any more disturbances for now they was easy in their minds. But an unhappy accident has spoiled all, for on Saturday Mr. Methuen of Bradford, on the instigation of some forward clothiers there, apprehended two weavers concerned in the late riots; upon the first notice of it, I sent my clerk to Mr. Methuen to advise him to admit them to bail, for the consequence would be prejudicial to the public peace at this critical juncture. He returned me no answer, but one Mr. Heylin a forward clothier and very obnoxious to the weavers on account of stopping their wages, told my clerk they should be committed; and on Sunday last they was sent to Salisbury Jail under the care of 16 dragoons and my self much reproached for advising to bail them, as being in the interest of the weavers; nor did you escape your share of the scandal. This mad step gave me the utmost concern for very early that morning my spies among the weavers told me they was assembling to rescue them, and to appease them sent out word I would endeavour to get them bailed at the approaching General Quarter Sessions, which quieted them for that day. But the next morning they was resolved to be revenged on the said Heylin on account of their committment in the absence of the Dragoons. I had notice of it late in the night and consulted with Major Sucklyn who commands a Troop of Dragoons here, who marched about 5 o'clock on Monday morning towards Bradford to a place where they were to assemble. The first body about 60 separated on the approach of the Troop, and about half a mile from Bradford he came up with a body about 50 more who would not separate but came on to /

to attach him, upon which he ordered six Dragoons to dismount and fire on them. He wounded three of them, one of which is since dead and the others ran away. I can't sufficiently command the excellent conduct of the major in this affair which is universally applauded. I did about the same time stop a body of 100 who was going to join them, telling them I would treat them as wolves since indulgence had no other effect; upon which they begged to be forgiven and immediately seperated. I do assure you, sir, that Bradford had paid dear for their folly if persons they have vilified had not taken care of them; we are now very quiet everywhere again, and Major Sucklyn and his Troop is still at Bradford till they have recovered of the panic fear, and I was willing to convince them I could keep this town quiet without troops; On the receipt of your letter I went to Bradford and shewed it to Mr. Methuen who promised me to take up no more but in concert with myself; and I do believe in my conscience, if this impudent action had been omitted, the Troops might have been withdrawn in ten days and if I have authority to promise no more shall be prosecuted, they may be still withdrawn by the end of this month. I do with humble submission conceive, as matters now stand, 'twill be much better to suffer them to stand committed than to make any concessions, for several letters have been sent me that they will never rise more if no more are taken up, so shall suspend sending a copy of your letter into Somersetshire until have your further directions. I have been very exact that you might give Lord Townshend a true state of the temper of the people, and to convince you I will do my utmost to deserve those marks of confidence you repose in me who am with great respect and truth

Sir, etc.

John Cooper.

If you think proper you may communicate this to the Duke of Newcastle to whom I have made representations on this affair. I kept your servant till 11 this morning to hear from Bradford and other parts and all is quiet.

Second Report of G. Vaughan to Viscount Townshend.

Bath January the 2nd, 1726/7.

My Lord,

Hearing that the weavers continued their outrages, I went this morning to Trowbridge and Bradford, and found abundance of mobbish people rambling about, but not one word of disloyalty among them. The mob notwithstanding what happened on Friday and Saturday last at Bradford were this day to have attacked that town in order to demolish Mr. Hilcen a clothier's house there, and go on to the other clothiers who were instrumental in taking Meyrick and Williams, and they were to have carried off some of the head clothiers as prisoners with them until their two friends were released. They alarmed the inhabitants of Bradford who fearing the troops they had in the town would not be able to defend them from such numbers, they sent to Trowbridge to beg Major Sucklyn to come to their assistance. The Major came and was hissed and insulted by the mob as he marched along, who at last grew so very impudent as to form themselves upon a common in his way to obstruct his march. The Major with great temper prayed them to desist and disperse, and having ordered six of his men to dismount to clear the way. The mob attacked them, upon which the Major ordered the six dismounted men to fire and the next to ride in sword in hand, who in a little time drove the mob and dispersed them at least as many as were not harmed. One of the mobb was killed upon the spot the first fire; I hear the fellow was a very abandoned fellow that was formerly a thief and was made an evidence of to hang his accomplices, so there is no great loss of him. The magistrates still continue very indolent except Mr. Methuen who is a very honest gentleman but not capable of himself to manage such an affair. He seems to be very much influenced by one Heylin a clothier at Bradford who is a very warm man and apt to run into violent measures and more hated by the populace than ever I knew a man, having in a manner put himself at the head of this affair in a manner so disagreeable to Mr. Cooper of Trowbridge and some other magistrates and gentleman, that they will not stir. I find that Mr. Earle has been at Frome and Trowbridge and had in a manner pacified the people so that there would have been no more mobs but for this fellow's violent persecuting spirit of taking people up. I have talked with a great many people that are now up who were actually gone to their habitations depending /

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depending upon Mr. Earle's promise of being delivered, but now they are all run mad again, and I fear your Lordship will find it difficult to pacify them even with a proclamation. These two fellows that are now sent to Prison were to have been of the number that were to have attended Parliament according to agreement with Mr. Earle. They had quite resigned themselves to his promises knowing him to be a man of character in this country, but now his negotiations are (I fear) broke by Heylin's indiscretion. The weavers tell me that there has been a prize of £30 gathered for them. In this place they ran almost as far as this town after the battle. I hear some of them are gone to invite the Kingswood Colliers to their assistance; if it might be done conveniently I could wish your Lordship would order a regiment of foot to be distributed about in parishes where the Dragoons cannot be accomodated. They would more effectually prevent their rising, whereas the Dragoons being in town cannot be with them until they are assembled in great bodies, and the foot being better able to march through enclosures would be among them as soon as they blow their horn which is the way they have of calling their people together. They have been very mischievous these three days past and have stopped people on the roads and plundered houses. Mr. Heylin and the clothiers at Bradford have indeed occasioned this by obliging all the shop keepers there to enter in an agreement or association not to trust the weavers, so that as they get no money, if they have no credit, they must steal; another think they have done at Bradford is to arm the mob of their town and give them money and strong beer to fight against the weavers which as it is illegal serves only to keep a mob on foot there, and to distract them at their own expense. Your Lordship will forgive me for having the greatest apprehension from these creatures, being convinced that if there were to be any alarm upon the coast that without some prudent step speedily taken they may be from despair necessity and resentment driven to join in a cause that I am persuaded the majority of them as yet abhor, for I this day observe them to have chalked their hats with G.W.R., which I asked them the reason of, and had the pleasure to hear them say they were King George's Weavers and though they had been otherwise represented they hollowed "King George for Ever" even after the Dragoons had brushed them upon the Common. I have nothing more to trouble your Lordship with at present more than to subscribe myself.

My Lord etc.

G. Vaughan.

Third Report of G. Vaughan to Viscount Townshend.

S.P.Dom. 35/64.

January the 9th, 1726/7.

My Lord,

I did myself the honour of writing to your Lordship on Friday last by Mr. Cameron as fully as I could the state of affairs which was the best account I could get by mixing with all sorts of people. I should have despatched Mr. Cameron sooner but that I was willing he should be an eye witness to what was done. I have now the pleasure to assure your Lordship that the method that is taken is so agreeable to the people that everything here and everybody are as quiet as I could wish and notwithstanding the weather is extremely wet and the waters are very much out all over the country, the poor people come in with all the cheerfulness, duty and loyalty imaginable, and are full of resignation to his Majesty and his administration, and I am persuaded that if those measures had been at first fallen into the poor wretches had never gathered themselves together in such a lawless manner as they have done; and as their rising has been entirely owing to oppression, so their resentment has appeared greatest where the oppression and tyranny has been as it is represented, for by all that I have seen a very small sum would repair all the damage that has been done except what was done on this day sevensnight, which the mob brought upon themselves by being so credulous as to believe that the troops were ordered to fire with powder only. The gentlemen and people of property all over the county agree that the poor people were originally aggrieved and some of the clothiers especially Mr. Heylin, was so far from redressing the poor people, that they had no other thought nor would hear of nothing but cramming down their injuries upon their fellow creatures by the assistance of the troops. The clothiers pretend to magnify the weavers gains, but I must observe to your Lordship that though every child of eight or nine years old can get its living in the clothing trade, yet the poor rate in most of the clothing parishes is at two shillings, half a crown, and three shillings in the pound; this tax the clothiers say nothing of but pretend it is owing to a decay of trade which many of them have (to my knowledge) insinuated to be owing to the Government, and I do not know but /

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but when this affair comes to be narrowly examined, your Lordship will have reason to believe (as I do) that the spirit of Jacobitism has not been among the weavers. I am sorry to observe to your Lordship that I expected the military gentlemen would have had more goodness towards us that have been employed by your Lordship than I have met with, and more impartially in their conduct than has appeared in some of them, but this I shall have the honour to acquaint Mr. Pelham with when I see him and I am sure his natural disposition and regard for the King's honour will move him to give such order for the future as that every gentleman in the King's service will take care not to demean himself below the character of his commission.

We began on Saturday night to have the Petition signed which was done then by above 200 with such resignation and in such a public manner as gave me the greatest pleasure. The weavers were informed that no one of them must be seen with so much as a stick in his hand and I must do them the justice to tell your Lordship that on Saturday yesterday and this day no weaver had presumed to appear with so much as a stick in his hand which, added to some other instances of their behaviour convinces me that we have not sufficiently expressed their duty and loyalty to the King in their petition. By much the majority of these poor people are dissenters, either anabaptists or presbyterians, and as I find the weavers are above eight thousand in number I own my apprehensions were very great from them, and the number of enthusiasts among them. But I am now perfectly persuaded that all tumults are at an end and that there is not the danger that I apprehended, and as there are methods taken to remove the cause, there will be no further riots and I believe the lessening the numbers of the troops would now be proper, and be well understood, besides I must assure your Lordship that they are very burdensome to the publicans and so incommodious to themselves that at Bradford (where there are two Troops) the horses have barely room to lie down which does them great prejudice, after being harried through such weather and roads as they have had. One Troop, it's agreed by everybody, to be sufficient at Bradford and if the four Companies of Foot that are said to be coming from Taunton do arrive, all the Dragoons may be drawn back as far as Devizes, Calne and Chippenham which are pretty good quarters; the four Companies may be well entertained and be properly posted at Frome, Trowbridge, Bradford and Melksam, and they will be sufficient for anything that can happen, for the weavers /

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weavers at least the majority of them, will I am sure assist the civil magistrates sufficiently for anything that can happen. Mr. Earle and his son came here on Saturday by way of Bradford and as they are both Justices of the Peace they both assist this day at a Petty Sessions at Bradford where there are three Justices more. Mr. Earle has taken a great deal of pains in reconciling his brethren who have hitherto drawn pretty much against one another and I think his talking to them will make such an impression that they will be the more unanimous for the future. We are just now parting to our respective businesses, our wives; he has deep waters in his way home and has had a bad fall in coming here. He will send your Lordship a copy of the Petition as it is now settled. He has had a great deal of trouble in this affair and had like to have been taken up and sent to Ilchester Jail in your Lordship's service which I should not have hindered if I had been with him and could have hindered it because that would have helped to convince your Lordship of the spirit of the clothiers against the weavers and everybody that has so much as been seen to speak to them; I can take no notice of your Lordship's last letter because Mr. Armison left it at my lodging at Bath. I have been acquainted by Mr. Earle of the contents of it, and have followed his commands in what I could; though I should do but little, I have endeavoured to do all the good I could to convince your Lordship that I am with the greatest duty etc.

G. Vaughan.

I believe a circular letter from the Custos Rotulorum to the Justices or a letter from his Lordship to the Clerk of the Peace to be communicated this week at the Quarter Sessions at Salisbury will be of great use if any thing more should happen; the strictest obedience that will pay in Middlesex to our Custos makes one believe this necessary, not that I believe that my Lord has such influence here as his Grace there.

Petition of W. Merricke, weaver to the King.

S.P.Dom. 35/64.

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty
The Humble Petition of William Merricke (one of your
Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects the distressed
weavers) who is now under sentence of death at New Sarum.

Humbly sheweth

That your poor petitioner being amongst several of his distressed and oppressed brethren in some tumults that were lately in the west who were assembled together only to obtain redress of the greatest grievances and oppression that ever any of your Majesty's subjects laboured under without the least disloyalty or undutifulness to your Majesty or your Government. Your petitioner was taken into custody and sent to jail and was directed by your Majesty to be admitted to bail and your petitioner and his brethren afterwards humbly submitted themselves (by their Petition delivered to your Majesty in Council) to your Majesty's goodness and mercy which Petition by your Majesty's order was examined into by the Lords of your Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council and by them reported in favour of your Petitioners to your Majesty. On which a Bill was ordered to be brought into Parliament to redress the grievances and oppressions complained of by your then Petitioners. And your Petitioners by such their Petition to your Majesty in Council having thus submitted themselves to your Majesty's great clemency and being promised by gentlemen in the country that if there were no further riots and tumults your now Petitioner and his Brethren might hope for pardon. The Grievances and injuries your now Petitioner and his Brethren labour under being so well known to your Majesty, your Council, your Parliament and to the whole Kingdom, your Petitioner hoped that his cruel masters the clothiers would have ceased to prosecute him on account of things being submitted to your Majesty and your Parliament, but on the contrary your Petitioner was at the last Assizes holden at New Sarum in the County of Wilts surprized and brought to his trial and prosecuted with the greatest fury and violence for crimes that hunger, oppression and necessity had driven him and his brethren to, and your Petitioner confiding on what had been promised him and his suffering brethren and not aware of such his trial nor prepared to make any defence was capitally convicted /

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convicted and condemned and without your Majesty's most gracious pardon must fall a sacrifice to the inhuman and barbarous rage and malicious persecutions of his said oppressive masters the clothiers and his wife and family be left in wnat and misery.

(Pardon signed 28th March, 1727)

Anonymous letter to Lord Harrington.

S.P.Dom. 36/47

The difficulties which people in general labour under, and the poverty that is coming on all with a mighty torrent and particularly on those of the landed interest who have estates of about £500 p. ann. and below it through the heavy taxes that the estates have been burdened with upwards of forty years past, and the great decay of the trade in the woollen manufacture is so visible that it is pity that a nobleman who has the interest of his country so much at heart as you have should be engaged in such a station as not to have an opportunity to consider and find out a proper remedy against these growing evils, which daily draw us nearer and nearer to ruin, and will inevitably without some speedy relief subject us to the will of our enemy the King of France and bring on us and our posterity perpetual slavery: your Lordship has received many complaints from the clothiers; they tell you they trade for nothing and that it is every day growing worse. I live in a clothing part of the country and although I am no clothier, and I thank God no weaver, I may and do know as well as any of them the causes of these complaints. Most of it proceeds from the contrivances and pride of the clothiers as living in luxury, neglecting their business, trusting servants with the care of their affairs, and beating down the wages of the poor and paying them in bread, cheese, meat, linen and woollen cloth and so forth all at a price at least one third more than the real value by which means the poor manufacturers is obliged to slight their work and consequently make a bad commodity which ruins our credit abroad and damps our trade at home; the price of wool falls and the poor workman is starved into frenzy and then is guilty of rash actions by which he forfeits his life to the law (if a lunatic can forfeit it). My Lord, it is not in my power to represent to your Lordship in a full light the grievances the poor undergo through the cruelty of their severe taskmasters the clothiers and your Lordship and those others who should find a remedy for these evils will never have a just and true understanding of the terrible condition of the poor work-folks in the woollen manufactory till you appoint a commission composed of men of great fortunes and very well known to you for their great integrity (without regard to that fatal distinction party) who shall sit at various places or parishes and by authority issue out their orders to the constables of each /

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each parish to summon in all their poor workers in the woollen trade who shall be examined into their grievances on oath and return these depositions signed by the commissioners you will find then these poor and more than halve starved wretches deserve in your opinion as well as in the opinion of ninety-nine in a hundred of the people in general that they deserve pity and Bedlam much better than the gallows. You would probably ask these wretches why they did not apply to the magistrate for relief. This seems a reasonable question. But how much like force doth it appear when they honestly answer that their masters have a power of appealing from the justices' orders which is attended with such an expense that the remedy is worse than the disease and which very much heightens the insult upon these poor creatures is that even the oppressors that is the clothiers themselves are (as a scourge to these poor wretches) made justices, a most notorious instance of which is at Westbury Leigh in the midst of the clothing country where there are two brothers who are clothiers and justices whose father and mother were poor work folks in the woollen manufacture. These two justices graze their cattle on their own estates, employ their own people to kill them and then pay it at a high price to their own work folk for their labour and contrary to an old law have of their own tyrannical wills built a small prison near them in terror to the poor. These two justices keep their coaches and pardon me, my Lord, wherever a tradesman is made a justice a tyrant is created and it would be as rational to make a shepherd of a wolf as to make a justice of a clothier; your Lordships taking this thing into your serious consideration before these poor wretches are made victims to the clothiers rage will be a most exalted act of charity that this age has afforded. You know, my Lord, that the hardships the poor have laboured under by the severity of their masters cant be pleaded in bar to their prosecution; therefore the clothiers cruelties will not come out on the trials of these sad people. A commission to enquire into it and a speedy remedy is humbly hoped and prayed for. Should I subscribe my name the clothiers resentment would be more than I could bare therefore I beg leave to write my self as I am

Your Lordships dutiful and humble servant
Englishman.

Westbury February 28th, 1738

Mr. /

Mr. Holland of Chippenham may be a worthy man but for sake of keeping an interest in the borough amongst the clothiers he may mince the matter.

To the Right Honourable the Lord Harrington, Westminster,
London.

R. Holland Esq. to Lord Harrington.

S.P.Dom. 36/47.

Sarum; 17th March, 1738.

My Lord,

I beg leave to acquaint your Lordship that three of the rioters (a weaver, a sheerman and a brickmaker) are capitally convicted, a special verdict for felony is found against another and out of ten who were indicted for misdemeanours, but one is acquitted.

The clothiers express the greatest satisfaction imaginable upon this occasion, and are sensible that all the ends that could have been expected from a special commission are now obtained. They are returning home full of hopes, from the examples that will be made of these rioters, they and their families may be enabled to carry on their business and enjoy their properties in safety.

His Majesty's great goodness towards us in these perilous times we cannot be sufficiently thankful for, and pray permit me once more, my lord, to return your Lordship my hearty thanks for the kind part you have acted in this affair

I am etc.
R. Holland.

R. Holland Esq to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/56.

Chippenham 9 Sept., 1741.

My Lord,

With the greatest submission I humbly beg leave to inform your Grace that I have been this afternoon attended by gentlemen deputed by the whole body of clothiers of Bradford and Melksham (in which neighbourhood the late notorious riot took its rise) to represent to me the danger they apprehend of another insurrection and their deputies drew up and signed their Representation in my presence which I have taken the liberty to enclose. I think myself in duty bound to lay it before your Grace and to express my Concern that there are no troops in these parts; the clothiers dread the consequences of another riot. The Civil Magistrates was unable to protect them in the last. The peace of this County seems to depend entirely upon its being preserved by the military force, and if I may presume to recommend anything to your Grace upon this subject it is that the same number of troops may immediately be quartered in the several towns in this neighbourhood as were before the late encampment.

I am etc.

R. Holland.

The Duke of Newcastle.

Representatives of the Clothiers of Bradford and Melksham
to R. Holland Esq.

S.P.Dom. 36/56.

Sept. 9th, 1741.

Sir,

We whose names are hereunto subscribed, being deputed by the body of Clothiers of Bradford and Melksham in the County of Wilts to lay before you the apprehensions they have of another dangerous insurrection in those parts from the manufacturing populace, beg leave to inform you,

That the weavers in the neighbourhood of Bradford and Trowbridge meet in small bodies of twenty or thirty at a time in the night season, as well as in the day time, a practice that preceded the two former riots, and that the result of their consultations is to oblige the clothiers of the respective parishes to employ no other weavers than such as are of their own parish upon pain of cutting and destroying the chains on the looms, and have dropped several anonymous and threatening letters in order to terrify the clothiers into a compliance with the unreasonable and exorbitant demands.

As nothing of the sort happened during the continuance of His Majesty's troops among us, and as we are apprehensive of the worst of dangers that may arise from an insulting and merciless mob (whose cruelties have been too lately and severely felt in this neighbourhood) we presume from your late good services conferred on us to request your interest for procuring us troops for the preservation of the peace of the country in general as well as our own persons and properties.

We are for the whole body of clothiers of Bradford and Melksham, with the highest respect.

Sir, your most obliged humble servants,

Edwd. Poore
Tho. Taylor
Saml. Cam
John Taylor.

Act of Council, Edinburgh City Archives. Edinburgh Burgh
Minutes

Edinburgh 20th October, 1736.

The which day the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council with the Deacons of Craft ordinary and extraordinary taking into their serious consideration the late notorious riot and insurrection in this city on the 7th of September last artfully contrived and audaciously executed by great numbers of wicked, dissolute, and blood thirsty persons of most detestable principles who in open defiance of the laws of God and man assembled together by beat of drum and surprised the city guard and thereby having by outrageous proceedings and violences so intimidated the burgesses that they durst not repair to the assistance of the magistrates to preserve the peace which they are bound by their burgess oath to do. They became absolute masters of the city and did with forge hammers and by fire forced open the doors of the city jail and after dismissing divers persons therein committed for heinous crimes. They layed violent hands on John Porteous then a prisoner there, and did in a most barbarous and inhuman manner, murder him in one of the public streets. And the said magistrates and council and being highly sensible that so long as such abandoned wretches, guilty of these heinous and unparallelled crimes, remain unpunished, all lawful authority will be precarious and the lives of His Majesty's subjects will be in danger from such infamous disturbers of the public peace and being informed that several authors and abettors of the said riot and insurrection and murder conscious of their crimes have absconded and fled from justice. To the end that certain knowledge may be had of the persons so fled or absconding, the said Lord Provost does authorise order and appoint the Lord Dean of Guild and his Council with all convenient speed and diligence to call upon all the Brethren of the Guild of this city and such other Burgesses and Trades as are not of the fourteen Incorporations to give in a list to him of their apprentices and servants that were in their service on or immediately before the said 7th of September and whether all or any of them have left or deserted their service since the said day and give in a list of the same with their proper designations, and do in like manner authorise order and appoint the several deacons of the respective Incorporations to call upon the masters of other several crafts and to get from them lists as aforesaid of their apprentices and servants that were in their service on or immediately before the said day and if all /

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all or any of them have left or deserted their service since that time and to give in a list of the same with their proper designations and do in like manner authorise order and appoint the Bailies of Leith, Cannongate and Calton and of Easter and Wester Portsburgh to call before them the several freemen and masters of any trade or occupation, residing within any of these jurisdictions and to get from their lists as aforesaid of their apprentices and servants that were in their service on or immediately before the day before mentioned and if all or any of them, have left or deserted their service since that time and to give in a list of the same with their proper designations and the said Lord Provost does hereby appoint the said Dean of Guild Deacons of Crafts and Bailies before mentioned to deliver in the several lists of apprentices and servants within this city and its liberties above specified made up in the manner before directed to the Lord Provost and Magistrates of this City that proper measures may be taken for discovering betwixt this and the 15th day of November next to come and to bring in the guilty to justice and condign punishment.

Returns of investigation into whereabouts of servants and apprentices.

Edinburgh City Archives

Edinburgh Jan 26th 1737.

Compeared before the Magistrates, John Cunningham late servant to Charles Mack and John Mack servant to said Charles Mack, Andrew Imrie late servant to Samuel Neilson and Peter Miller Alexander Constable and Gavin Bayn all servants to the said Samuel Neilson, Thomas Jackson, servant to James Steedman vintner of Edinburgh, James Dempster late servant to Charles Mack.

Edinburgh 28th Jan. 1737.

Henry Scrimseur and Thomas Ramsay servants to Mr. Peter Wright presented themselves this day before the Magistrates and acquainted them since the seventh of Sept. last they have been working under their said master at Newhailles and continues in the service still

Edinburgh 29th Jan. 1737.

Charles Thomson, William Robertson, Daniel Gow, servants to Roderick Chalmers painter - presented themselves before the Magistrates and represented that they were working with the said Roderick Chalmers upon the seventh of Sept. last and for the most part since that time.

Edinburgh 31st Jan. 1737.

George Montgomerie servant to the above Roderick Chalmers painter compeared before the Magistrates and was with his said master on the 7th Sept. last and still continues.

Eodem Die compeared David Logan servant to Samuel Neilsen, mason and represented that he was in service upon the 7th Sept. last for a considerable time thereafter and has been close working in Edinburgh ever since.

Edinburgh /

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Edinburgh 1st Feb. 1737.

Compeared before the Magistrates Thos. Burns servants to James Syme, senior solicitor in Edinburgh and acquainted them that upon the 7th Sept. last he was servant to the said James Syme and continued in his service until 29th of that month at which time he went to his father's at Gifford-hall where he has been ever since and returned to Edinburgh upon his seeing his name advertised in the newspaper as one of those who were accessory to Capt. Porteous murder, in order to vindicate himself thereupon.

Eodem Die Compeared Geo. Balir, Walter McFarlane and Patrick Cousie who declared they were all servants to Samuel Nelson, mason, in Edinburgh upon the 7th Day of Sept. last and continued in the service for some time thereafter and ever since they left that service they have continued close working in Edinburgh as chairman.

Eodem Die compeared Patrick Niven and Angus Fletcher both servants to Samuel Nielson, mason and declared they were in the said Samuel Neilson's service and still continues.

Edinburgh 3d February, 1737.

Compeared Thomas Strauchan servant to Walter Buchanan, barber in Edinburgh before the Magistrates.

Edinburgh 3d February, 1737.

Compeared William Glass servant to Mr. Campbell in the coffee house who served Mr. Neilson, mason, upon the 7th Sept. and until the end of the month and after that time went to Mr. Campbell's service where he continues.

Edinburgh 9th February, 1737.

Compeared Daniel Gray servant to James Syme, solicitor and James Simpson, tailor at Somerhall and Ann Hutchinson his spouse who made oath that the said Daniel Gray was in his bed at 8 of the clock at night on the 7th of September last and did not go out of their house till five of the clock next morning.

Eodem Die compeared Robert Tinto and Alexander Cowan both /

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both servants to Adam Burnet, wright in Edinburgh.

Compeared Robert Smellie servant to Alexander Douglas Wright who brought along with him Agnes Sword spouse to Matthew Keen servant to Charles Hope Weir and Helen Smith the said Robert Smellie's lodger who gave their oaths before Baillie Crockat that the said Robert Smellie was servant to Colin Alison, wright in Edinburgh and that he was within his own home the night betwixt the Seventh and Eighth of September last.

Edinburgh 16th February, 1737.

Compeared Robert Blackie servant to George Campbell, wright who brought along with him William Gladstone, portioner and James Reid wigmaker at the windmiln who made oath before Baillie Crockat that the said Robert Blackie was in his house the whole night betwixt the 7th and 8th of September last.

Edinburgh 26th February 1737.

Compeared David Jarvis servant to Robert Stewart, late Deacon of the Shoemakers of Edinburgh who brought along with him George Hepburn, journeyman shoemaker in Cannongate and Jean Downie spouse to the said George Hepburn who made oath before Baillie William Crockatt settling in judgement that the said David Jarvis was in the house of Christian Paton in dweller in Cannongate the whole night betwixt the 7th and 8th of September last. Causa Scientia the Deponents are lodgers in the same house and know as they have deponed. This is the truth as they shall answer to God.

Edinburgh 9th March, 1737.

Compeared Andrew Hays, late servant to Charles Mack, mason, and also John Moffat, baxter in Edinburgh, landlord to the said Andrew, and both upon their great oath depone that the said Andrew Hays came into the house of the said John Moffat betwixt 9 and 10 at night upon the 7th day of September last. That he went then to his bed and lay there till 6 of the clock the next morning and the said John Moffat saw him come into his house as above and knows he lodged there as aforesaid and this is the truth as they shall answer in /

in God.

In presence of us Wm. Crockatt etc.

The whole persons above designed did compear at the several dates above mentioned and declared they were willing to justify themselves from the importations of being guilty or accessory to the murder of Capt. John Porteous upon 7th September last and to answer to any informations that shall be exhibited against them. In manner mentioned in the Council's Act of date the Nineteenth day of Janry. last.

And. Imrie
Peter Miller
Alexr. Constable
Gavin Bayn.

Ld. Provost Wilson to an unknown member of the Edinburgh Corporation.

Edinburgh City Archives

Dear Sir,

From the enclosed copy of Resolutions and orders made yesterday you will observe what may be my fate and what may be the fate of the community; these carried 82 against 17.

I am now under the custody of the Usher of the Black Rod; it is attended with a considerable expense but I must own that hitherto my confinement is done with great civility.

My situation cannot be very agreeable. However had the community escaped I believe my misfortune would have sat easier upon me.

I have reason to believe that the Bill upon the above Resolutions may be brought on next week and that I will be served with a Copy and allowed to be heard by myself or Counsel against the Bill according to the usual forms at the second reading and if the time for the second reading be not sufficient to bring up evidence that upon petition I may be indulged with a further time.

No doubt you will lay this copy of Resolutions and orders before the Magistrates and Council that they may have it under their deliberation assisted with the best advice they can both within and without doors whether it is proper for to apply by petition in behalf of the City to be heard by Council that what is the Bill is prejudiced to the City's rights and privileges may be opposed.

I do not know whether there may be in the Bill or by amendments added matters that are not in Resolutions which may also be harmful to the Community that cannot be known till the Bill is brought in and alterations or amendments are offered and agreed to whereof you that have timeous notice so soon as it is possible if such things shall happen.

If it shall be the pleasure of the Council to apply by petition to be heard against such things as do affect the Community /

Community a draught of a petition shall be made out and sent down to be signed by the magistrates under the Common Seal. And in that event I believe it will be necessary that the City's Charter by the James VI 1603 and the Charter by King Charles I 1636 the Act of Parliament made in the year 1690 establishing the City Guard be sent up. And if that shall be agreed to Mr. Irving by this post has wrote to Mr. James Boyle informing how these papers are to be got and how these acts of Parliament may be authenticated.

It gives me great pleasure that none of the four bailies nor Dean of Guild nor treasurer are involved with me and conscious of my own innocency I am quiet in mind under all the apprehensions that may occur to me.

I believe it may be fit that further evidence be brought up and of this also there shall be timeous notice.

It gives me some pain that any of the privileges of the City may be in danger and that if any of them shall be taken away what remains may be thereby thought less secure. We concur in our compliments to the magistrates, convener and Council.

I am etc.
Alex. Wilson.

London 2d April, 1737.

Unsigned letter to Lord Provost Wilson.

Edinburgh City Archives.

Edinburgh 26 April, 1737.

My Lord,

Yours which came by express I answered on the 23d which I hope you'll have in course and to which I must refer your Lordship. Yours of the 21st is before us the contents of which we observe.

One of His Majesty's Messengers arrived here on Saturday afternoon with an order from the House of Peers for citing John Baird, Thomas and Walker Ruddiman, Major Robertson, John Hislop, James Napier, and Roderick Brown all of whom he served either personally or by leaving copies at their dwelling houses. Ruddiman, Major Robertson and Brown are gone.

It is very proper to acquaint your Lordship that although the order sent per the Messenger is signed yet the Messenger has ventured to give citations to John Din, Alex. Nisbet, John Baillie and Robert Stewart by virtue of private instructions relative to the aforesaid order and which instructions are not signed. Your friends here apprehend these summonses to be unwarrantable and we believe your Lordship will easily be of opinion if John Din hath left no stone unturned to bring this about and the situation he is at present we have just reason to be afraid will prompt him to go any length to load either your Lordship or the Community and we are much mistaken if Nisbett and Baillie be not very proper persons to concur with him. It is commonly reported here that Din can or will depone that a day or two, three at most after Porteous' murder he came to the Council Chamber and in presence of some of the magistrates, the Dean of Guild and P. Lindsay he acquainted you that he knew where two or three of the murderers of Captain Porteous were and particularly condescended on the place they were to be found and desired a warrant from the magistrates to secure them which they refused saying they had got trouble enough about that affair and it was near over. To this fact it is said Nisbett and Baillie who is commonly known by recruiting, John Din or Bean Baillie will adhere.

Its /

Its further talked Din will say that the morning before the murder happened he acquainted the magistrates that he had got notice at Dalmahoy Entry from a woman that Porteous was to be hanged that night and that she was keeping her son in the house to prevent his going out, for the mob had acquainted him to be there and that her son came to the door and also acquainted Mr. Din of this. That the magistrates took no notice of what he told them. Moreover, it is talked he will say that as he has had long one office in the Town upon such respect of a mob (as happened in Porteous' case) he had known the magistrates' precautions by doubling the guard, calling out the train bands and the like precautions he will say he believes prevented such mobs from happening. What else he will do or can say no person can imagine. A man of his principles it's certain will go very great lengths and that for his being a witness if possible is to be prevented and that you might be the better enabled to accomplish it, we thought it was expedient to send you one extract of the libel at Wright's expense against him, his declaration and the Interleg. with the whole depositions adduced amid the process both for and against him. You have also sent you one extract of the Act of Council taking away his salary and the report of the Council against his plea which Clerks all duly authenticated together with an extract of the like Libel and the petition by you and the Town Council to the Court of Session. It was impossible to get the original process about Wright's inflame against him because when the feud betwixt Wright and him was ended the same was given up but you have here with sent you a copy of the libel and Lord Newhall's Interleg. upon and two Petitions drawn up by Mr. Erskine of Grange. You have likewise herewith one of the processes at Bailie Crockat and Rocheid against Bean and him whereby you will see the matter a little more clearly than that you had in my last and further you'll observe exactly taken in the extract a true copy of the order Din was at which you'll see is attested by Alex. Nisbett his nephew.*

You /

*

We must likeways inform you that the Messenger when he came to Town on Saturday afternoon, although he had a letter for Mr. Macmillan, yet he went to Brigadier Guest so soon as he arrived and did not call for Mr. Macmillan till Monday at 10 o'clock when he delivered his Letter and when he was informed that what summons he had given without an express order of the House was unwarrantable and not good, he answered that he did not know how to behave in this affair.

You have also a copy of Din's letter to the magistrates when he left Edinburgh and Mr. Lind the Sheriff was observed not a little to interest himself to get Mr. Din the citation and he was heard to say that he had got written instructions from Mr. Lind so you'll know from what quarters that proceeds.

Captain Cleland was not in town on the 7th of September. Roderick Brown at the time acquainted him of a mob that was to happen.

The whole papers I have named come by John Band who sets out from here tomorrow.

Peter Crichton who is to be found at The Four Swans in Bishopsgate Street can acquaint your Lordship how the Guard happened to be taken in if it be thought necessary to call him.

Alex. Mason Merchant he sets out from this in a day or two if he be with you in time he can acquaint your Lordship how formidable the mob was and in what manner the magistrates were beat back he'll wait on your Lordship so soon as he arrives.

Cruickshanks whom I mention in my last by the influence of some person refuses to come and now pretends he does not know Captain Lind; you will know if any order be necessary although he should say he does not know Captain Lind yet he seems to be material for the state of the Guard.

As for Robert Stewart we don't know well what he can say but its talked he will agree with Din in some things and by the by I must acquaint your Lordship that he took it very much amiss when he was told Deacon Hunter was to go up for he Stewart told that he knew more than Hunter did of that affair and since he has been using all methods possible to bring matters this length for he has entertained a grudge ever since your departure.

John Din, Serjeant, to the Bailies and Corporation of
Edinburgh.

Edinburgh City Archives.

Much Honoured Gentleman,

Being served with an Order by His Majesty's Messenger instantly to repair to London to make my appearance before the House of Lords upon the 3d of May next ensuing to answer to such questions as shall be than put to me and that at my highest peril I am in duty bound to obey, and thought it also my duty by this to acquaint you thereof. And as by this emergent I cannot attend my public business in the Town Courts and Town Clerk's Chamber, I have ordered my servant Thomas Fraser to attend to the same, to whom I humbly hope you will give countenance.

Gentlemen, I am heartily sorry that any of you should have taken the least offence against me. Surely I never intended anything but the greatest respect imaginable for the honourable Magistrates and ever shall do so, and therefore for a time must bid you heartily farewell, and I am etc.

John Din.

Edinburgh 25 April, 1737.

The Secretary of the Lords Justices to the Deputy-Keeper of
The Signet.

S.P.Dom. 35/59.

Whitehall November 29th, 1725.

Sir,

I am favoured with your letter by a Flying Packet of the 24th inst. This new attempt upon the Government of bringing an Indictment against Captain Bushell and the other officers who commanded the King's troops at Glasgow at the time of the late Riot there is indeed very bold and most extraordinary after so much levity used towards the offenders as should in all reason and justice have produced a more grateful return. However, since these poor people are so far misled by those who now openly make it their business to give the Government all opposition and their own country all the disturbances they are able, it is very happy that the forms will allow time sufficient for consideration of what should be done as to the King's lawyers giving or refusing their concurrence in the carrying on of this very odd prosecution; for this is an affair of very great importance and the consequences of which should be very well considered. I shall not fail to lay it before the Lords Justices at their meeting next Thursday and in the meantime I hope Mr. Solicitor and the other lawyers of the crown will forbear declaring their Resolution upon it one way or another till they receive their Excellency's Directions.

I send by this Flying Packet the Lords Justices orders to the Court of Justiciary not to suffer any thing to be done or to the putting in execution the sentence of transportation against the Glasgow Rioters till they receive their Excellencies' further directions which I hope will prevent any attempt for rendering that sentence ineffectual.

I beg you will be so good as to take care that the enclosed letters to the Lords of Justiciary and to the King's Solicitor be delivered.

I received none from you last Friday and it being in the news that in passing the waters which were out between Newark and Grantham the mail from Scotland which should have come /

come in that day was lost; if you wrote by that mail you will please to send duplicates of it.

I am etc.
Charles Delafaye

Mr. Campbell
Deputy Keeper of Signet.

Secretary to the Lords Justices to Viscount Townshend.

S. P. Dom. 35/60.

My Lord,

I have nothing to trouble your Grace with all besides the enclosed. The main business before thr Lords Justices will be whether the King's Solicitor shall be directed to concur in the prosecution of Captain Bushel and the other officers who commanded at Glasgow at the time of the riots This concurring in letting his name be used as the Attorney General's is here in all criminal proceedings by way of Information in the King's Bench. If he does not it will be called obstructing of justice but then it will be disallowing that the soldiers killing a man upon such an occasion can be murder. Whether he does or not, as the suit may be carried on in the names of private persons, the relations of the deceased, the officers, considering the temper of the people out of whom juries must be choosen, will no doubt be found guilty; and a pardon must be passed for them.

I am etc.

Ch. Delafaye.

1 Dec. 1725.

Captain C. Simons to the Lords Justices of Regency.

S.P.Dom. 35/60.

May it please your Lordships,

In pursuance of an Order from the Honble. Commissioners of his Majesty's customs in Scotland I think it my duty to acquaint your Lordships of my arrival here with the Princess Mary sloop having on board five of the Glasgow Rioters, a corporal and five men of the Right Honble. my Lord Deloraine's Regiment to guard them and believing Greenwich to be the safest place to lie for their security, I shall do it till further orders.

I am etc.
C. Simons.

Greenwich. Dec. 1st 1726.

Names of the rioters of Glasgow received on board the Princess Mary sloop the 23rd December 1725 - James Falconer, Walter Buchanan, William Hamilton, George Macfarlane Janet Hill.

Glasgow Burgh Minutes.

Glasgow City Archives.

7th July, 1725.

Convened John Stirling and James Johnson Bailies. The Magistrates and town council represented that by the Edinburgh newspaper called "The Caledonian Mercury" which gives account of the late tumult and riot in this place of the mobs entering upon and pillaging of Shawfields House and of attacking the King's troops at the Guard and the troops firing upon the mob whereby several who were innocent were killed and others wounded. There are several things in that point set forth not fact and likeways contains gross reflections on the conduct of the magistrates and inhabitants and that the magistrates upon their getting account of the said point judging it their duty for their and their inhabitants vindication of their conduct did with the concurrence and advice of several of the council and principal inhabitants drew up a true account of the whole matter made up with Informations taken from persons who were eye-witnesses of the facts and had sent the same into Edinburgh in order to be put into the public points which though refused yet with much difficulty was pointed by way of a letter from the magistrates and a considerable number of copies cast off and dispersed, whereby many entertained a juster notion of the magistrates and inhabitants and their conduct during these molestations than what they formerly were impressed with by the account in the "Mercury" and that before the Provost went to Edinburgh to the Convention where he is at the time, it was concerted and agreed to among the magistrates and several of the Council met in a Committee that when he the Provost went into Edinburgh he should employ some of the ablest lawyers and draw up a representation or memorial of the whole affair and transmit the same to London to the Lords Justices with all despatch and further represented that they had this day received a letter from the provost at Edinburgh giving account that he had been with the General and with the King's Advocate and that in a day or two the General with some regiments and a train of artillery were to be here upon account of the late tumult and likewise the Advocate or Solicitor with some others to take a precognition in the said affair, which letters the magistrates produced and craved the Council's mind what answer to return to the provost /

provost; all which being heard and considered by the Council, and that several of the Council were present and concurring with the magistrates in drawing up of the fore-said account, taken from informations as said is, and that the magistrates could have done no less therefore they approve of the magistrates' procedure above represented and they are of opinion that and do agree that without loss of time the provost while now at Edinburgh lay the whole affair before some of the ablest lawyers in as clear light as he can and have their advice whats proper for the town to do, and that a Memorial or Representation thereof be drawn up and transmitted to London to the Lords Justices and that before the General and Advocate and others to be concerned in that affair take journey for this place that the provost would come west with him to appear for the town in the said pre-cognition, that the same be taken impartially without respect of either side and that the provost would order matters so as with all diligence he may come west and remit to the magistrates to write him their mind accordingly, and likewise considering that there will be occasion for several meetings in the progress of this affair with respect to the management thereof, the council remit to the magistrates, dean of guild, and deacon convener, and any others of the council they please to call to their assistance to manage and do therein what shall be most proper for the good of the town.

The Provost of Glasgow to Mr. Delafaye Secretary to the
Lords Justices of Regency.

S.P.Dom. 35/57.

Sir,

We have seen several accounts that have been published of the late tumults that happened at Glasgow very wide of the truth and which seemed calculated to accuse the Magistrates as guilty of some accession to or connivance at those disorders, and being apprehensive that some representatives not very favourable have been or may be made to his Majesty or their Excellencies the Lords Justices of our conduct and behaviour we conceive it to be our necessary duty to offer the enclosed humble address and account of these proceedings to His Majesty and are obliged to give you the trouble of this and do desire you would do us and the Town of Glasgow the favour to lay the enclosed before their Excellencies the Lords Justices by which you will very much oblige Sir, your most humble and most obedient servants, the Magistrates and Common Council of the City of Glasgow.

Signed by order in presence and name of the Council,

Charles Miller, Provost.

Glasgow 31st July, 1725.
Mr. Delafaye.

Glasgow Burgh Minutes

Glasgow City Archives

31st July 1725.

The magistrates and town council do empower the provost in their names to sign two doubles of the following address to His Majesty with an account of the proceedings touching the riot and tumults which lately happened in this city which facts therein represented are truth so far as they know and know nothing to the contrary, and remit to the magistrates to transmit one of the signed doubles to Hanover to His Majesty and the other to the Lords Justices at London. Follows the address:- To the King's Most Excellent Majesty, the humble address of the Magistrates and Common Council of the City of Glasgow. Most gracious Sovereign - We your Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects beg leave humbly to represent to your Majesty the great sense we have of the many blessings your kingdom do enjoy under your Majesty's mild and auspicious government, and to express our utter abhorrence and detestation of these riots and disorders that have lately happened in this your Majesty's loyal though in so far unfortunate City of Glasgow. We are deeply sensible how highly criminal such outrageous proceedings are, how destructive to society and how unbecoming a corporation that hath endeavoured to distinguish itself by an exemplary affection and zealous adherence to your Majesty's Government and the interest of your royal and illustrious family; but as these disorders were begun and carried on only by the lowest and abject sort of the populace without the countenance or approbation of any person of note or consideration in the place, we humbly hope from your Majesty's known justice and great goodness that neither the folly nor the wickedness of such mean, obscure and for the most part unknown miscreants will be charged to the account of your Majesty's most loyal City. Your Majesty's most faithful and well meaning citizens have, with no small concern and astonishment seen their Magistrates committed to the jail of their town with the government of which they are entrusted without being allowed the benefit of finding bail and carried in an extraordinary way prisoners through a considerable part of the country then thrown into the nauseous common prison of Edinburgh as favourers and encouragers of tumults which they utterly detest, but while we are conscious and persuaded /

persuaded of their innocence, we presume to approach your Majesty's royal throne with humble confidence of your Majesty's most gracious protection and soutenance, and to lay before your Majesty the true and faithful account hereunto annexed of the several circumstances of these unhappy disorders; and although we cannot take upon us to justify this behaviour from errors in point of judgement which may readily have fallen when under the concern and the anxiety that naturally arise from so unexpected emergent, yet with regard to the security of these our intentions and candour of our endeavour to settle and maintain the peace of the town entrusted to our management, we do most humbly submit our conduct to your Majesty's great wisdom.

That your Majesty may enjoy a long, glorious, and quiet reign over a dutiful, submissive, and contented people, is the earnest prayer of, may it please your Majesty, your Majesty's most faithful, most loyal, and most dutiful subjects, the Magistrates and Common Council of the City of Glasgow. Signed by order in presence and name of the Council by

Ch. Miller.

A true and faithful account of the proceedings touching the riots and tumults which have lately happened in the City of Glasgow.

Upon the 23rd and 24th days of June last, the day before and the day on which the Malt Tax commenced in Scotland for the service of the year 1725 there was an appearance in the streets of some disorderly persons, consisting chiefly of women and boys who were soon dispersed by the provost and other inhabitants. Upon the 24th in the evening, two companies of his Majesty's forces came to town under the command of Captain Bushell which drew a concourse of people into the streets but that being usual on such occasions gave the magistrates no appearance of any riots until the provost (who is chief magistrate) had notice brought him that the persons he had ordered to prepare and fit up the guard room for the reception of the forces were dispossessed by a mob, the doors of the guard room locked and the keys carried off. The provost thereupon sent the town officers to break open the doors of the guard room but they being bruised and beat off, he went in person from the town house towards the guard to have the same made open and in his way was informed that the mob /

mob was much increased and threatened to pull him in pieces if he came there on that errand and was thereupon advised by several of the most respectful burgesses that it might tend to quiet the disorders should the soldiers be sent to quarters that night upon billets and the common town guard advertised to attend as usual. Of this the commanding officer being advertised he agreed thereto by reason his men being fatigued and few and saying he expected to be reinforced the next day with two other companies, upon which the town guard was advertised to meet at the ordinary time, which is between ten and eleven at night. The provost with Mr. Campbell of Blythwood, the only other justice of peace then in the place with several of the burgesses of best account, continued in the town house till towards nine o'clock at night, and then there being no appearance of the least disorder they went together to a tavern hard by.

A little after ten at night accounts were brought to the provost that the mob had again got together and were making an attempt upon Mr. Campbell of Shawfield's house, situated in one of the extremities of the town, whereupon the provost and gentlemen with him went immediately to Mr. Campbell's house and by entreaties and threats had prevailed upon them to retire, having then done little other damage than breaking some of the windows; and at that time when there was good hopes of their dispersing, great numbers of disorderly and riotous people advanced from several quarters towards the house, insulted the provost, beat down the town officers and threatened the provost and burgesses with him, on some of whom they laid violent hands, so that they seeing it was impracticable to stay the torrent were obliged to make their escape, which they did with great difficulty, having been pursued by several fellows armed with clubs. After which, being then near twelve at night, while the provost was consulting with some of the burgesses about calling the military together, a serjeant came to the provost from the commanding officer offering (if there was occasion) the assistance of the military, to which the provost answered he was most willing providing they could be got together, adding he only feared that they would be in bed and would be disarmed and knocked on the head before they could be brought to meet together (the mob being then in full possession of the house and very numerous and outrageous) to which the serjeant answered that was the case for the men would be in bed.

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The next day being the 25th, for preventing further confusions, the provost desired the commanding officer that he might have his troops ready to take possession of the guard house, and while they were convening the provost and a good many principal inhabitants went to Mr. Campbell's house, caused secure and shut up the entries and doors in the best manner and returning to the guard house where the military were drawn up gave possession of it to the officer and two companies under his command. Immediately after the King's troops were thus lodged the provost gave orders that twenty men of each of the town's Companies of train bands should convene at the town house at three o'clock afternoon, in order to assist in suppressing any tumults might happen. Betwixt two and three a considerable number of riotous persons consisting chiefly of women and boys, having got together near the town house, the provost with the assistance of sundry of the inhabitants caused them soon to disperse and fly in a little time (as the provost was afterwards informed) a good many more appeared before the guard house and insulted the military by throwing of stones. It has not hitherto appeared that any of the troops were disabled or hurt by this insult, nor does it appear that the officer or soldiers under his command were at this time in any great danger. However, the commanding officer ordered them to fire by which first fire two men were killed who had no way been concerned in the riot and thereafter continued to fire by platoons towards the four principal streets though in some of them there was no mob nor not so much as a single stone thrown.

The provost on hearing the first fire sent a gentleman with a request to the commanding officer that he might fire no more and to acquaint him that a sufficient number of townsmen should be sent to assist in quelling the mob. The captain promised not to fire till the gentleman should return, notwithstanding which he did fire. Upon the gentleman's return to the provost he found him environed by a more formidable mob than was at guard complaining highly of the injury done the town by firing sharp in the streets whereby some of the inhabitants were killed and several wounded. The provost did all he could to pacify them by threats and smooth words, but all was of no avail. The multitude was so incensed that they proceeded to break open the doors of the town house in order to ring the alarm bell and to take from hence some old fire-arms and halberts were therein lodged. The provost hereby perceiving he should not be able /

able to quell the enraged mob who were increasing every minute and who he presumed would still be greater upon ringing the alarm bell, despatched again the same gentleman immediately to the officer with a message that he believed it would tend to the safety of the officer and King's troops and the quieting the present tumult for him and his men to retire out of town. The officer accordingly retired and though there were no numbers pressing upon him he continued firing upon the streets whereby in all there were nine persons killed particularly one gentlewoman out of a window two stories high, some in the sides and others dangerously wounded, whereby not above five or six at most so far as can yet be known, were any way concerned in the mob; upon the troops leaving the town some of the mob followed after and came up only with two of the soldiers who through indisposition had fallen behind. These two being brought back to the town one of them was dismissed and the other being hurt in the head was carried to the town house to be taken care of, and in a few days being fully recovered was likewise sent off.

Glasgow Burgh Minutes.

Glasgow City Archives.

11 August, 1725.

The Magistrates represented that in pursuance of a former act dated the thirty first of July last they had transmitted to London the Address to His Majesty an account of the tumults that had happened in this City signed by the Provost by order of the Council and that they had received a letter from Mr. Delafaye, secretary, dated at Whitehall the fifth day of August inst., bearing that the said address and account were laid before the Justices and that they had ordered the same to be transmitted to my Lord Townshend to be laid before His Majesty; which letter the Magistrates produced in Council and being read the Council empower the provost in their name and by this order to sign the following letter to Mr. Delafaye and transmit the same to him:- Sir, This is to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 5th current and to return our thanks for the honour you have done us by laying the address and account of the tumults that happened in the city which we transmitted with our last, which was the 31st of July before their Excellencies the Lords Justices. We are heartily sorry that the account from His Majesty's Advocate to the Lords Justices of the tumults should have differed from that account which we had the honour to transmit to you, but we are very much mistaken if our account does not perfectly agree with the Examinations taken by his Majesty's Advocate when he was pleased to allow to be present. As for other Examinations which his Lordship may have thought fit to take in presence of Major-General Wade, Colonel Spottiswoode and Colonel Guest without allowing us to be present or acquainting us of such examination, we can say nothing about them, neither knowing the character of the persons examined nor the questions that were put to them, though we might have hoped his Lordship would have allowed them a copy of them, that at least we might have had an opportunity to have observed to himself wherein they might have been defective or might have set matters in a bad light by neglecting to take notice of facts which perhaps might be material for discovering of the naked truth.

We cannot think my Lord Advocate will give the name of examinations to some discourses passed betwixt his Lordship /

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ship and some of the magistrates in a tavern when the honourable persons you mention were present. It may be indeed, if my Lord Advocate had transmitted anything of what happened at that time, the import may not be favourable, as the report truly stands, but we hope his Majesty will notice the examinations taken openly by my Lord Advocate and from thence a true judgement of their behaviour will be made. And therefore seeing we apprehend from what you are pleased to write that His Majesty's Advocate has not transmitted the Examinations themselves but an account collected from them we ask pardon for troubling you with a copy of the Examinations taken when we were present as they were delivered to us by my Lord Advocate himself, and hope they will support the account we have given of these late unhappy tumults. We could not presume to take any farther Examination without receiving their Excellencies command to that purpose, but are very willing how narrowly the matter be enquired into, providing it be in an open way so as the whole facts may be stated in the plainest manner and the most agreeable to the truth, since a very small variation in the way of putting questions or in the words of the answers makes a considerable difference in the evidence. We have endeavoured as far as in us lies and also as far as in prudence we durst attempt considering the ferment that the unhappy accidents which attended these tumults had put the inhabitants of this city into, to impress their minds with the obligation they are under to give due obedience to the law of the realm, and we did not doubt his Majesty's Advocate had done the maltsters in this city the justice to represent that in conformity to the law imposing the Malt Duty on grain malted they have given security for the stock in hand and for all the malt they made from June 23rd and that the Officers of Excise have free, quick, and ready access to all their barns as oft as they require it.

We still hope from his Majesty's great goodness and the former behaviour of this city that His Majesty will be graciously pleased to put the most favourable construction upon our actings, and we hope upon all occasions to give proper proofs of our firm adherence and unalterable effect towards His Majesty's sacred person and Government and of our due regard to the laws of the realm. We are with very great regard Sir, your most obedient and humble servants.

Signed /

Signed by order of the common council and in their
presency by

Ch. Miller
John Stirling
James Johnson
James Mitchell
John Armour.

Glasgow Burgh Minutes.

Glasgow City Archives.

11th November, 1725.

Ordain Arthur Tran, late Treasurer, to pay to the surgeons after named sums following for their pains, attendance, charge and expences in recovering seventeen of the poor people that were wounded and shot by the military on the 25th June last when the guard was insulted by the mob viz. to Mr. George Thomson, doctor, £3. 3s. sterling, to James Hamilton, surgeon £1. 1s. sterling, to Alexander Horseburgh surgeon £2 sterling, to Thomas Buchanan, surgeon, £2. 12s. sterling, to Alexander Patterfield, surgeon, £4 sterling, to Thomas Dougall, surgeon, £2 sterling, to Mr. William Stirling, surgeon £6. 2. 6 sterling, to Mr. William Stirling, surgeon, £1. 1. sterling extending in whole the above sums to £25. 4s. sterling conform to their several accounts revised by the quarterly committee.

11 March, 1726.

Ordain Michael Wallace, treasurer, to pay to John Hamilton Writer to the Signet £369. 14s. Scots depursed by him to Advocates and otherways upon the town's account in reference to the late tumults and mobs that happened in this city when the Malt Tax Act commenced conform to a particular account thereof.

The Provost represented that the morning he had an express with letters from London giving account that Daniel Campbell of Shawfield had given in a petition to the Parliament craving relief of his damages he sustained by the mob who entered upon and pillaged his house in June last, and whether that relief was to be from the public or from the town he had no account of, but that it was requisite the Council should appear for the town's vindication; which being heard by the Magistrates and Council they remit to their Magistrates, Dean of Guild and Deacon Convener and any of the Council they please to call to consider what is proper to be done by the town in that affair and to do therein as they see cause for the good of the town.

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13th June 1726.

The Magistrates and Town Council recommend to one another to have their thoughts upon what is proper for the town to do in reference to the £6,080 sterling granted by the Parliament to Danile Campbell of Shawfield for his damages and wherewith the Town's 2d on the pint is burdened with the repayment thereof to His Majesty, whether the Town in its present circumstances should borrow the money for the payment thereof or that 2d should continued vested in His Majesty till repayment, and remit to the quarterly committee and any of the Council who pleases to meet together to consider thereupon, and their meeting to be held upon the 16th inst. or sooner and report their thoughts at the meeting of the next council.

The Colliers of Kingswood to "Mr. Turnpike".

Gloucester Shire Archives.

Kingswood 3d July, 1727.

The Colliers' Letter to the Turnpike.

Sir,

We are informed that you are drawing up your cause and action against us for riot and rebellion and deem us liable to be indicted for common rogues and that you are justified in so doing having an Act of Parliament of your side, but before you insist we desire you to take this comparison; if a house is wilfully set on fire, whether they may be rendered common rogues that runs with their weapons to put it out (Is a question, Mr. Turnpike).

This is our case. A fire may be wilfully kindled by omission or Commission, but if both do agree with long continuance its the harder to put it out. Now to your Act of Parliament wherein you have got a full grant to cut fuzz or heath out of any common to repair the highways (quoted on the 26th page of your Act) Oh we shall have brave highways now you have got a full power to cut fuzz and heath to mend them, and stand and get the country's money in for so doing.

Now Turnpikes are grown much in fashion
The hardest tax in all our Nation
For when Wine and Women and Stock-jobbing past
The Turnpike must help us at last

Now, Mr. Turnpike, we humbly beg your favour to hear our comparison construed. Not at the beginning of your Act you complain of the badness of the Highways which obliges us to tell you how they came so bad. When you was Lord of the Manor, you suffered your tenants to haul a thousand loads be it more or less of the highways into your land; not only so, but in the streets for this many years past you have been throwing straw on the streets where we have as much right to walk as you, Mr. Turnpike, and that you commonly shovel up that once or twice a year we are able to prove this offence you have committed.

Now /

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Now Mr. Turnpike to the omission when you was a magistrate you had an Act of Parliament well grounded with experienced actions and good authority which gave you power to command men qualified of good report, rank, and quality to be surveyors for to mend the roads and highways but by the omission of your duty and your carelessness and oversight you have lost your honourable magistracy and brought yourself under the reproach of a Turnpike by mending the highways with fuzz and heath so that you have no more reason to indict us for a riot than if we had been going to stop the tide from over-flowing. So Mr. Turnpike we most humbly beg you when you purchase another Act of Parliament against the colliers not to put any Latin in it; one thing more we would desire of you that you would lay out all the money that you have got by the Turnpike in catechisms, which you may have for two pence a price and give one to every one to those whose names are quoted between the 8th and 13th pages of your Act and by that they may learn to do their duty in that state of life unto the which it shall please God to call them.

And call in this Act as a thing clandestinely purchased as may appear in our next letter in particular. So we remain our gracious King's subjects until death.

We colliers in Kingswood.

Petition of S. Jones, Carpenter to the Mayor and Corporation
of Bristol.

Bristol; City Archives.

15th Sept., 1729.

The Petition of Samuel Jones Carpenter was read setting forth that for near three years last past there had been due to him three hundred and ninety pounds upwards for several Turnpikes and Turnpike Houses erected and for re-erected over this City by the direction of the Commissioners authorized by Act of Parliament for that purpose and that for want of being reimbursed the said sum he laboured under extreme difficulties. And praying this House to take his Case into consideration and some debates arising thereon; It is ordered the master of the said Petition be referred to Mr. Mayor the Alderman and Sheriffs and Mr. Mayor-elect and Sheriffs-elect who are desired to enquire into the nature of the affair complained of and to report their opinion touching the same to the next house.

29th Sept., 1729.

City Chamberlain ordered to advance Jones £200 on assignment of Toll Charges by the Trustees to the City for that sum.

The Mayor and Magistrates of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/46.

October 9, 1738.

My Lord,

About three this afternoon a multitude of colliers from Kingswood came in a body into this City armed with an axe and large sticks and committed the outrages as in the Informations here enclosed. 'Twas six o'clock ere anything was known to us and past nine ere we got the said informations. We are apprehensive it may be necessary to send some of the Regiment now here to some of the adjacent parts without the city to put a stop to these riotous proceedings which we submit to your Lordship's direction as also whether you shall think it proper to cause the neighbouring justices in Gloucestershire to make strict enquiry who have been the authors and abettors of this insurrection.

We are etc.

Will. Jefferis Mayor

H. Elton

Jacob Elton.

To His Grace the Duke of Newcastle.

Enclosed.

9th October, 1738.

City and County of Bristol, to wit.

The Information of John Abbot who works for Cormack, brickmaker, living at Bedminster.

The Informant on his oath saith that about the middle of this day he loaded the said Samuel Cormack's wagon with coal at a place called The Lodge in Kingswood and from thence he proceeded with his wagon to this city and near the Castle Gate here he met with a great number of persons which appeared to /

to him to be coalminers and without any manner of cause or provocation some of them overset the said wagon with the coal in it and threw it about the street which was carried off and broke and cut the wagon to pieces and further this Informant saith that he believes there were three hundred at least of the said coalminers assembled together in a riotous and tumultuous manner and this Informant saw them shoot out or empty another persons cart of the coal that was in it near Castle Gate aforesaid and he asked some of them why they did it and they told him for revenge and further this Informant saith that a great many or most of them had large truncheons or sticks in their hands and threatened, they would serve all the wagons and carts alike they met with. And further this Informant saith that in the said affray one drag chain value four shillings and one iron pin value sixpence were taken and stolen from the said wagon by some of the said persons, and some of them assaulted and violently beat the boy who assisted in drawing the said wagon.

The mark of John Abbot.

Sworn before W. Jefferis, Mayor.

Bristol, to wit. The Information of Thomas Moggs of the City of Bristol, porter, taken on his oath the 9th Day of October, 1738.

The Informant on his oath saith that this afternoon about three o'clock he was in High Street in this City and did see a great number of men and boys to the amount (as he believes) of two hundred come through Nicholas Gate and so pass up High Street, all or most of them having sticks and clubbs of two or three foot long in their hands in a riotous and insolent manner to the disturbance of the peace but with what intent they were so assembled he knows not.

Sworn the day and year above written before one W. Jefferis, Mayor.

Bristol to wit. The Information of James Cornish of the City of Bristol porter taken on his oath the 9th day of October, 1738.

The Informant on his oath saith that this morning as he /

he was at the Stand at the Tolsey he heard a collier (whom he knows not) declare that there was about a thousand men up in Kingswood for that the gentlemen that belong to the glasshouses and cupolas would not give a prize for the small coal as they usually did and that they would come to the Lamb without Lawford's Gate where Mr. Chester was supposed to dine and that they would have his dinner from him or they would make the Lamb shake and that they intended to come to the quay in this City and if they found any coal on the quay they would heave it over and if they found any vessels coming with coals they would sink them and further this Informant saith that about three o'clock this afternoon he saw about two hundred men and boys with large sticks in their hands all appearing to be colliers and two of them with broad axes on their shoulders came up High Street in a riotous and unlawful manner huzzaing several times to the disturbance of the peace and believed such their assembly was with intent to commit the outrages above mentioned to be declared by the said colliers had they met with any such thing in their way.

The mark of James T. Cornish.

Sworn this day and year above written before me, W. Jefferis, Mayor.

The Mayor of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/46.

My Lord,

The colliers being yet assembled in a very riotous manner I take the liberty to acquaint your Grace that since the last account sent of them they have filled up several coal pits in use and burnt or otherwise destroyed the necessary utensils belonging to those pits to the great damages if not entire ruin of the respective proprietors.

They will not suffer any coal to be brought to this city and for their support (as they pretend) during this tumult take upon them to exact and have actually exacted money from all passengers as well common carriers as others and those who had no money have been severely beaten.

I am etc.

Will Jefferis, Mayor.

Bristol 11th October, 1738.

The Mayor of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/46.

Bristol October 14th, 1738.

My Lord,

I have the honour of your favour of the 13th Inst. by the express which I communicated to our Recorder and Alderman this evening who with myself return your Grace most hearty thanks for the same. I sent for the commanding officers who had not any orders by the express so we have respited our further resolutions about the soldiery till Monday and if then all things relating to the colliers appear as quiet as at present there will be no occasion of sending any soldiers to disperse and quell them for our drivers bring in coal plentifully.

The Copy of your Grace's letter I sent to the Justices at their Meeting this day in order to make inquisition to find the authors and perpetuators of this insurrection and I hope both they and we shall pursue this affair so to the bottom as to have examples made of some in order to deter such villainous proceedings for the future.

We have had no tumult in this City since Monday last for the rioters have not dared to enter having had our constables ready as well the extraordinary and ordinary town watch doubled.

I am etc.

Will. Jefferis, Mayor.

The Mayor of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/46.

Bristol December 9th, 1738.

My Lord,

I have (together with my brethren the Aldermen) taken pains to come to a full discovery of the persons who were active in the riot of the neighbourhood of and in this City of which I had the honour to transmit information to your Grace in October last and have offered rewards for apprehending some of the ringleaders but without effect.

We have reason to believe that if some of the persons concerned might be assured of a Pardon, a discovery of their accomplices we should come to the bottom of that affair which has given this city so great uneasiness is likely to be attended with consequences mischievous to it.

We therefore make it our request to your Grace that His Majesty's most Gracious Pardon may be offered in the Gazette to such of the rioters as that before the end of this month discover two or more of their accomplices so as they may be convicted.

I am etc.

Will. Jefferis, Mayor.

The Mayor of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/122.

Bristol 21st May 1753.

My Lord,

We are sorry to give your Grace the present trouble, did not the preservation of the peace and safety of this City absolutely require it.

We this morning received Information that a great number of colliers and other disorderly persons were got together at Kingswood in Gloucestershire near this City with a flag flying and armed with sticks and giving out that they did so on account of the present rise of corn and that they soon intended to pay a visit to this City, whereupon we immediately wrote to the neighbouring Justices acquainting them of this information and desiring their assistance and offering all the assistance in our power to prevent the bad consequences which might attend such riotous proceedings and sent out and about to observe their motions, raised all our Constables and took all the measures we could to secure the City and quell any acts of violence those disorderly persons might commit in case of their coming hither; whilst we were taking these precautions one of our scouts returned and brought the account contained in an affidavit a copy of which we transmit to your Grace.

However about one o'clock, their whole posse came into the City and advanced to the Council House where we were then met and four of the leaders being admitted upon their paroles we demanded of them their grievances, and they alleging that it was the present high price of wheat, we expostulated with them and told them the price had been settled in the usual manner by information upon oath viz. at Five Shillings and Three pence per bushell, but if there was any just foundation for altering it, and as soon as we could alter it legally we would. This seemed to pacify them and they promised to go out to the rest and all go quietly home about their business notwithstanding which and that upon their continuing to stay about the Council House, the Proclamation was read to them. A large number of them went down to the Quay and were there breaking up and attempting to /

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to rifle a ship called The Lamb with seventy tons of wheat for Dublin, which occasioning a skirmish between them and the constables the rioters took to stones and brickbatts and forced their way up to the Council House where we were assembled, threw their stones and brickbatts in at the Council House Windows whereby the same were shattered to pieces and several persons particularly Mr. Town Clerk much wounded and ourselves in great danger. Notwithstanding the mischief they give out they will return with a more numerous body and as the place they come from is very populous and has in it a great number of underground workmen who are but little known, and on that account very desperate fellows, though we shall do all in our power as Civil Magistrates to preserve the security of the City yet we are much afraid we shall hardly be able to do it without military assistance, the City being greatly alarmed and under terrifying apprehensions of more mischief from those daring fellows.

We have had former experience of His Majesty's care of this City and also of your Grace's readiness and assistance in a like emergency which if not soon we have great reason to dread some very bad consequences. We are informed that the nearest place where any of his Majesty's troops are now quartered is at Gloucester from whence or in any other more expeditious way that assistance can be sent to us, it will come extreemely seasonable.

Your Grace will excuse any inaccuracies as we are every moment in expectation of a second visit.

I am etc.

John Clements Mayor

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle.

The Mayor of Bristol to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/122.

My Lord,

After acknowledging the favour of your letter of this 22nd Instant we think it our duty to acquaint your Grace that the Riot instead of being appeased is grown to a greater head, and we have to add that the rioters to the amount of several hundreds not less than 8 or 9 this morning entered the City in the most outrageous manner. The Troops from Gloucester arrived likewise this morning with whose assistance joined to our fellow citizens the Mayor with all expedition marched to the Bridewell where one of the rioters was detained since Monday last but before they could arrive the gates were broken open and the rioter rescued, and in the skirmish which happened between the rioters and some of our citizens several of the rioters were slain on the spot by the citizens in repelling force with force, and between thirty and forty taken prisoner. This eventure apprehend will be attended with worse consequences from the spirit of resentment which rages among them in so much that they have begun to make reprisals by taking some of our citizens prisoner and we hear are about to venture with armed forces into the City. We can assure your Grace that nothing shall be wanting on our part towards quelling this tumultuous insult but from the height its grown to and the strong inclination we find even among the lower sort of our citizens to join them it may be too hard a task for our present forces, and therefore must leave it to your Grace to take such further measures as the present exigency seems to require and we rest etc.

John Clements Mayor
for myself and the aldermen

Bristol 25th May, 1753
Friday 9 o'clock at night

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle.

The Petition of eight colliers of Kingswood to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/125.

Bristol Newgate January 3rd 1754.

My Lord Duke,

We the poor unhappy colliers now confined in this place beg leave to state our case before your Grace concerning the hardships and calamities we at present undergo in our confinement and most humbly pray your Grace to cast an eye of compassion on us, as otherwise we must inevitably perish here for want of subsistence and are extremely sorry to think we should trouble your Grace again but hope our necessitous condition may plead our excuse for so doing.

We beg leave to acquaint your Grace our case was as follows. That on the 25th day of May last a company of weavers etc. assembled in a riotous manner contrary to the Laws of this Kingdom on pretence of the exorbitant price of bread at that time in this place, and carried away by violence all such people as came in their way who would not voluntarily engage themselves in their cause, of which number was your Grace's poor Petitioners who were at that time on their lawful business and were forced to go along with them quite contrary to their inclinations. Notwithstanding which your Grace's poor petitioners were seized and carried away to prison in order to have their trial for the same which accordingly came on last September, when one of them was sentenced to be imprisoned for six months for the same and all the rest for two years since which time we have been confined here pursuant to the above sentence.

We therefore most humbly pray that your Grace out of your usual goodness to serve the distressed will please to consider our present unhappy condition and intercede with His Majesty on our behalf. Who we hope out of his Royal Clemency will be pleased to order our sentence to be mitigated as most of us have wives and large families which are unable to provide for themselves and are ourselves reduced to a perishing condition for want of proper subsistence, and were compelled to act in the manner we did, and we shall use our utmost endeavours to make all possible restitution for what /

what is past by our future behaviour and as in duty bound
will ever pray.

We are, my Lord Duke, your Grace's most thankful
and poor Petitioners.

Benjamin Crew
Nathaniel Crew
George Olds
William Young

John Paviour
Francis Mountain
William Jeffreys
Robert Holloway.

Report of the Attorney General on the Petition.

S.P.Dom. 36/125.

17th Jany., 1754.

Dear Sir,

I have perused and considered the enclosed petition from the colliers confined in Newgate at Bristol for the late most audacious and treasonable riot in that City and considering the Crown thought proper on the application of the Corporation of Bristol in order that the convictions to be had under it might make the deeper impression on the minds of the colliers and operate in terrorem so as to deter them the more from joining in the like attempts for the future, and as there were none capitally convicted and the only punishment inflicted was fine and imprisonment I submit it to His Grace's consideration whether he will under the circumstances of this case think it proper for the Royal Mercy to interfere by shortening the time of their punishment, especially when the greatest care possibly was taken to bring none to trial but those who were the most active in the riot - If my Lord Duke is inclined to shew any regard to this Petition I then further submit it to his Grace whether he will not be pleased to send it to Bristol in order to know the sense of the Corporation of that City upon it they having been consulted in every step hitherto taken in that affair. I am etc.

Jas. Sharpe.

Attorney and Solicitor General to the King concerning Abbis and Lowe.

S.P.Dom. 35/4.

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty

May it please Your Majesty,

In humble obedience to your Majesty's Commands signified to us by the Ld. Viscount Townshend, we have considered of the annexed extract of a letter dated the 4th Instant from West Bromwich whereby it is represented that the Coroner's Inquest have found Mr. Samuel Lowe and a Dudley man (whose name appears by other papers to be Thomas Abbis) guilty of wilful murder although as is mentioned in the letter of the Ld. Viscount Townshend, what they did was by command, and in assistance of the Sheriff to suppress the riots at West Bromwich and being commanded to give our Opinions as to the best method of stopping and discharging the proceedings in this matter.

We do most humbly certify Your Majesty that in regard there is not any affidavit transmitted whereby the Case of the said Lowe and Abbis is set forth, except the single affidavit of Lowe, we are humbly of opinion it will be proper for your Majesty to direct that the Indictment against them be removed by Certiorari into the King's Bench and that they be admitted to Bail to appear the first day of the next Term in that Court, and that in the mean time the Coroner be directed to transmit copies of the Depositions made before him and the Judges of Assize or the Justices of the Peace to take and transmit affidavits that may show the case of the said two persons indicted, and then they will be proper to apply for Your Majesty's Pardon to protect them against such illegal proceedings.

All which is most humbly submitted to your Majesty's royal wisdom.

Ed. Northey
N. Leshmere

Aug. 13, 1715.

Opinion of Attorney General Northey concerning payment of constables.

S.P.Dom. 35/4.

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty

May it please Your Majesty,

In humble obedience to your Majesty's Commands signified to me by the Lord Viscount Townshend I have considered of the annexed letter of the High Sheriffs, Deputy Lieutenants and Justices of Peace met at Warwick whereby they apply to your Majesty on behalf of some Constables that they may be reimbursed what they have expended in raising the posse to suppress riots, and I do most humbly certify Your Majesty that by the Law the Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs and Constables may command the posse within their jurisdictions to be aiding and assisting to the suppressing of riots and tumults, and all persons commanded to assist them therein are by law obliged so to do as a duty they owe to the Crown for preserving the peace, and I do not know of any law that obliges the Crown to pay the posse for doing their duty therein. By the Statute of 2nd of King Henry V Cap 8 it is provided that the Justices and other Officers in suppressing of riots according to the directions of that Act and of the Statute of the 13th of King Henry IV shall execute their office at the King's costs in going and continuing in doing their office by payment thereof to be made by the Sheriff of the same county by indenture between the Sheriff and the Justices and other Officers to be made of such payment, whereof the Sheriff on his account in the Exchequer may have due allowance. And by that Statute the posse is to be assisted to the said Officers, but no provision is made for their charges.

The Sheriffs, Deputy Lieutenants and Justices of the Peace by the annexed letter however represent that this time it will be for your Majesty's service, and that it is necessary that satisfaction be made to the Constables for what they have disbursed in raising and subsidising the posse lately called in by your Majesty's special command for reducing the late riots and rebellions in and about Birmingham but have not mentioned what sum is demanded, and it seems hard that if the Constables have been necessitated to make such disbursements they should not be reimbursed, which can only be by your Majesty, they not being enabled to make a rate /

rate for these expenses.

All of which is most humbly submitted to Your Majesty's
Royal Wisdom.

Edwin Northey.

Nov. 29, 1715.

Opinion of Attorney General Northey on request by Magistrates for military help.

S.P.Dom. 35/10.

My Lord,

In obedience to your Lordship's commands signified to me by Mr. Delafaye I have perused the enclosed letter of the Magistrates of Tiverton addressed to your Lordship, whereby they give an account of a riot actually committed, and an insurrection designed in those parts, and it is said to be very probable that the civil power will not be sufficient to preserve His Majesty's peace and therefore having commanded by opinion whether it be not legal to send Orders to His Majesty's Forces in those parts to assist the Civil Magistrates in the execution of their office when thereunto required by such Magistrates and whether in case a riot should happen and the Magistrates should desire the assistance of the soldiers, Proclamation being made according to law and the rioters in defiance thereof continuing assembly, the soldiers may not then be directed to fire upon them and in short what assistance and in what manner may legally be given by the Military to the Civil Power in the execution of the Laws particularly in suppressing riots, tumults and insurrections?

I do most humbly certify your Lordship that by the Common Law all His Majesty's subjects (among whom the soldiery are included) are to be assisting to the Civil Magistrates on their command in suppressing riots, tumults and insurrections and may, if necessary, for the apprehending of such offenders use their arms; but this is further explained and provided for by the Act made in the first year of his Majesty's reign entitled An Act for preventing Tumults and Riotous Assemblies and for the more speedy and effectual punishing the Rioters, whereby it is enacted that if the persons unlawfully, riotously and tumultuously assembled or twelve or more of them after Proclamation made as is directed by the said Act shall continue together and not disperse themselves within One Hour, that then it shall and may be lawful for the Civil Officers therein mentioned where such assembly shall be and to send for such other persons as shall be commanded to be assistant unto them to seize and apprehend and they are thereby required to seize and apprehend such rioters so continuing together and to carry /

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carry them before a Justice of the Peace in order to their being proceeded against for such their offences according to Law, And it is thereby declared that if any of the persons so unlawfully riotously and tumultously assembled shall happen to be killed, maimed or hurt in the dispersing, seizing or apprehending or endeavouring to disperse, seize or apprehend them by reason of their resisting them the officers and those in aid of them shall be free, discharged and indemnified as well against the King as all others for or concerning the killing, maiming or hurting any of the offenders that shall happen to be so killed, maimed or hurt - And I am of opinion it will be legal and proper to send His Majesty's Orders to the Forces in those parts to assist the Civil Magistrates in the execution of their Office when thereunto required and to use weapons in case of resistance.

I am with the greatest duty and respect etc.
Edw. Northey.

26th Oct., 1717.

Opinion of Attorney General Yorke concerning S. Fechem's Case.

S.P.Dom. 36/16.

To His Grace the Duke of Newcastle one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.

My Lord,

In obedience to your Grace's Commands referring to me the annexed Petition of Stephen Fechem of the city of Bristol, drugget maker and desiring me to consider the case and report my opinion thereupon, that your Grace might be able to lay this matter in its full and clear light before His Majesty and receive his pleasure in it, I have considered the said Petition which sets forth, That the weavers in the said City of Bristol having in the beginning of September last concerted and agreed with each other to raise their wages or the price of their labour, several of them about one hundred or more, came at times to the house of the Petitioner who in the way of his trade did employ vast numbers of them; that more particularly at one time about fifty of them in a body came and declared to the Petitioner that they would not be content with their usual wages which was eight shillings per piece but would have nine shillings per piece whereupon the Petitioner told them that he could not afford to give the wages which they demanded without being a loser by his goods, and that he would rather choose and lay down his trade but withall assured them that he would never lower their wages; that upon Saturday the Twenty Seventh of September last in the afternoon three weavers came as messengers from the whole body (as they said) to the Petitioner to acquaint him that if he should not think fit to deliver out work that night or the next Monday upon their own terms they would give him as good a breakfast that morning as they had given Harris a dinner, or to that effect (meaning one Mr. Harris another drugget maker or master weaver whose house or great part of it they had the same day about noon pulled down or destroyed). That upon this the Petitioner applied himself to the magistrates of the said City and prayed their assistance and protection, and afterwards the same evening as well as the next day being Sunday several weavers were sent as from the general body, as they expressed it to the Petitioner, to renew and insist upon their former demands of having work delivered out at their own price with /

with threats and menaces in case of refusal and on Monday morning early some of the Petitioner's friends brought him intelligence that upwards of one hundred and forty weavers were got together to the house of one of them and had stripped themselves down to the waist and declared with one voice and had bound themselves by an oath to each other, that they would murder the Petitioner, some of them saying that they would cut or chop him in pieces as small as pot-herbs and burn or destroy all his goods, which account the Petitioner had and hath great reason to believe was true. That about seven or eight of the clock in the same morning a small party of about fourteen or sixteen soldiers was sent to the Petitioner's assistance headed by two sergeants and about ten of the clock there appeared about four or five hundred weavers, armed with swords, clubs, sticks and stones who advanced towards the Petitioner's house, and they first attacked the soldiers (who placed themselves as a guard before the said house) with large stones, broke several of their heads, drove them from their post, and put them into great disorder. Thereupon one of the said sergeants called out on the Petitioner, who had got a few fire-arms to fire from within, declaring it would be out of their power to save him from being murdered or his house from being pulled about his ears. That the mob in a most riotous and tumultuous manner broke and shattered the windows of the Petitioner's house and forced open his cellar door which lay towards the streets, and so got into the house and burnt and destroyed his goods to the value of about Two Hundred Pounds, and attempted to break open the fore-door of his house which they had in part done, and then and not before, the Petitioner and two of his servants, that assisted him, expecting that his whole family would be barbarously murdered, did fire some pieces loaded with powder and ball, and some of the rioters and one of the said sergeants were killed and others wounded, but whether through such firing or how else the Petitioner cannot say. That soon after the Sheriffs of the said City with their Peace Officers before them, supported by a great part of the Regiment then quartered in the City came to assist and protect the Petitioner whereupon the mob dispersed. That some of the persons wounded as aforesaid died within the City of Bristol and the Coroner's Inquest there found that what the Petitioner had done was in his own defence, that others died in the County of Gloucester, and the Coroner's Inquest there after having considered of the facts for three days without separating did find the Petitioner guilty of manslaughter and the Petitioner is threatened to be tried at the Assizes to /

to be held for the said County of Gloucester. That the Petitioner hath ever since been forced to leave his house and family, and hath just reason to apprehend that he should be in danger of his life, in case he returned unless some example be made of the said offenders; therefore the Petitioner prayed his Majesty's Royal Protection, and that such directions might be given therein as to his Majesty should seem meet.

I beg leave to certify your Grace that the most material allegations of this Petition are verified by the annexed Affidavits of the Petitioner and John Skinner and supported by several Informations and Examinations taken upon oath before the Mayor and some other of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the City of Bristol, which have been laid before me, so that it appears to me that the Petition contains a true representation of the Petitioner's unfortunate case and that what was done by the Petitioner on this occasion was in the necessary defence of himself, his house and family against the most outrageous violence. Whereupon and upon considering the general Combination which hath been entered into between great members of weavers in the City of Bristol to enhance their wages contrary to law and the particular conspiracy concerted between them against the Petitioner which was attended with a very malicious circumstances. I am of opinion that it is advisable for his Majesty to grant his most gracious Pardon to the Petitioner and any other Person who acted in his assistance, and shall appear to be in the same circumstances for the fact above-mentioned even before they shall be tried for the same to the end that his Majesty's Royal Resolution to protect his Subjects in their defence against such illegal and tumultuous practices may the more strongly appear.

I further certify your Grace that since this Petition was referred to me I have received from Mr. Crackerode the several Informations and Examinations mentioned to have been taken upon oath before the Mayor and some other of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace of Bristol by which several persons to the number of twenty five or more are charged with divers facts committed in the said riots and tumults, many whereof as stated in the said Informations and Examinations appear to me to amount to Felony, for which it seems to be necessary for example's sake and in order to deter people from the like offences that some Prosecutions should be set on foot. The particular nature of these crimes and the manner of prosecuting may /

may be distinctly considered before the Assizes, but I apprehend the fullest and clearest evidence of Felony arises upon the facts of entering by force into houses and shops and maliciously cutting and destroying woollen goods in the loom or rack with which several persons are positively charged upon oath and which is expressly made Felony without Benefit of Clergy by an Act of the Twelfth Year of his late Majesty's Reign entitled An Act to prevent unlawful Combinations of Workmen employed in the woollen manufactures and for the better payment of their wages.

All which is humbly submitted to your Grace's Judgement

P. Yorke

December 20, 1729.

S. Fechem Esq. to H. Fane Esq.

S.P.Dom. 36/16.

To Mr. Henry Fane in London.

Bristol Janr. 12, 1729/30.

Sir,

I am favoured with your of the 10th inst. and have as under sent you the names of all the persons that was killed which on examination I find to be nine which was more than I knew before yours put me upon examining for I never knew but of eight. What the Town Clerk has wrote about to Mr. Mason was more of himself and other people stirring him thereto than any thing from me but some of my fellow tradesmen being somewhat sufferers in the loss of goods damaged and destroyed by the mob are very vigorous for taking them up, but for myself am of your own opinion to finish with my own troubles rather than prosecute others. The Coroner of the County of Gloucester intends to indict the Officers of the Outparish for not taking me up so should be glad if any way can be found to move it out of his power which is in your power to obtain. I doubt not but you will do your utmost for me in that as you have done in what is past with my most humble service to your uncle and self with hearty and sincere thanks for all favour.

I am etc.

Step. Fechem.

Christopher Norroway	William Terry
William Hampton	William Thomson
John Newton	John Rogers
Andrew Hall	John Dyer
John English, Sergeant of the Lord Delorain's Regiment.	

All weavers except the sergeant.

The Petition of J. Brickdale Esq. to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/124

To the most Noble Thomas Holles Duke of Newcastle one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State.

The Humble Petition of John Brickdale of the City of Bristol, Merchant, most humbly sheweth

That your Petitioner was very active and instrumental in quelling the late riot at Bristol which happened there the beginning of June last at the apparent hazard of his life and in which he was very dangerously wounded.

That William Fudge one of the principal rioters was killed in a scuffle between the townsmen and rioters but not by your Petitioner notwithstanding which your Petitioner was by the Coroner's Inquest which was obtained very illegally and unduly and by force found guilty of the murder of the said William Fudge and which Inquest was removed by Certiorari last Term into the King's Bench and upon an Affidavit of the Coroner that it was obtained by compulsion and contrary to evidence was quashed.

That the rioters have since got another Inquest taken by another Coroner by which your Petitioner and several other persons therein named for the murder of the said William Fudge and which Inquest is also returned by Certiorari into the King's Bench in Order to be quashed next Term.

That to put a stop to this method of taking Inquest after Inquest his Majesty has been most graciously pleased to grant his Royal Pardon to your Petitioner and several other Persons therein named for the murder of the said William Fudge and to direct the said Pardon to be sued out and the said Inquests to be quashed by the Solicitor of the Treasury at the expense of the Crown.

That nevertheless your Memorialist is informed and hath too much reason to apprehend that at the ensuing Assizes at Gloucester, Indictments will be preferred by the said Rioters against your Petitioner and several other Persons for the murder of the said William Fudge and in case the said rioters should by false evidence procure the said bills to be found your Petitioner is very desirous that Henry Bathurst Esq. his /

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his Majesty's Counsel who goes that Circuit should be concerned for your Petitioner and the several other Persons on the trial of such Indictments. But as Mr. Bathurst is his Majesty's Counsel, your Petitioner and the several other persons can't have his assistance as a counsel in any such prosecutions by way of indictments without a special Licence from His Majesty for that purpose, and as the whole of the affairs relative to the said riot have been directed and carried on at the expense of the Crown.

Your Petitioner most humbly prays your Grace that such special Licence may be issued accordingly permitting the said Henry Bathurst Esq. to be of counsel for your Petitioner and such other Persons upon any Indictments which may be found against them for the murder of the said William Fudge and that the expense of such a Licence may be defrayed and the said Indictments defended by the solicitor of the Treasury at His Majesty's expense.

And your Petitioner shall ever pray

The Memorial of J. Brickdale Esq. to the Duke of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/124.

To the Most Noble Thomas Holles Duke of Newcastle, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State.

The Memorial of John Brickdale of the City of Bristol humbly sheweth that your Memorialist had on occasion of the late riots there need to trouble your Grace for his Majesty's favour to set aside an Inquest obtained by the rioters against your Memorialist and others for wilfull murder, which Inquest was quashed by the Court of King's Bench on motion by the Attorney General on behalf of His Majesty, and a Noli prosequi likewise issued; and your Memorialist thought a total end had been put to the affair.

Hereupon another Inquest was taken (as advised) by the same Coroner and by a Jury of gentlemen who brought in the verdict that William Fudge, the person slain, was killed by persons in their own defence.

Since which one Edward Webb a Coroner of the same County, a man of a very bad character, has taken a third Inquest amidst the riotous colliers whose verdict was the same as that of the first; and on which the Coroner's Warrants are out against your Memorialist and John Chivers.

There are sufficient proofs in the hands of Mr. Sharpe to show clearly that every person examined on the first and this last Inquest are all perjured people and your Memorialist humbly hopes they will be dealt with as such, and the Coroner punished for his misbehaviour.

Your Memorialist finds Mr. Attorney General waits for your Grace's further orders which I most humbly supplicate your Grace to give him for issuing a Noli Prosequi for all concerned; for moving the Court of King's Bench for a Certiorari to bring the Inquest into that Court to be quashed, and an Information to be granted against the said Webb the Coroner.

To prepare a warrant for a Pardon for all concerned.

To prosecute the witnesses who perjured themselves at the /

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the first and last Inquest.

Your Memorialist is under much concern to give your Grace this fresh trouble on this affair, and humbly hopes the necessity will plead his excuse. Your Memorialist therefore humbly prays your Grace's instant favour and good Offices in these particulars and he will as in duty and obligation bound be ever thankful for the same.

John Brickdale.

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The Opinion of the Attorney General Ryder to the Duke
of Newcastle.

S.P.Dom. 36/122.

To His Grace the Duke of Newcastle

May it please your Grace,

In obedience to his Majesty's commands signified to me by your Grace's letter of the 22nd of June instant, transmitting therewith several letters, depositions and papers that had been put into your Grace's hands by Mr. Sharpe, Solicitor of the Treasury, which shew that a new inquisition had been taken before Edward Webb, one of the Coroners for the County of Gloucester; by which Mr. John Brickdale woollen draper, Mr. John Chivers, baker, and Mr. Michael Miller jeweller of the City of Bristol and four other persons unknown are found guilty of the wilful murdering of William Fudge, who was one of the principal ring-leaders to the late riots there; and setting fourth, that it is His Majesty's Pleasure that I should immediately issue a Noli Prosequi against this new inquisition; and that I should move for a Certiorari to return the said inquisition into the Court of the King's Bench in order to its being quashed there, and an Information thereupon granted against the said Coroner. And as it is now become necessary to put a final issue to this affair (as otherwise the riotous colliers may find means to procure new inquests as fast as the old ones shall be quashed). It is also His Majesty's Pleasure that I should forthwith prepare and transmit to your Grace the draught of a proper warrant granting the King's Pardon to the said Brickdale Chivers and Miller and to all others who may be liable to be proceeded against on account of the death of the said William Fudge.

In obedience to His Majesty's said Commands I have granted my Warrant for a Noli Prosequi to the said inquisition, and have prepared the enclosed draught of a proper warrant for granting his Majesty's Pardon to the said John Brickdale, John Chivers, and Michael Miller and to John Powell apothecary, Nathaniel Nangle jeweller and goldsmith, John Miller jeweller and goldsmith, Thomas Knox merchant, Samuel Davies merchant, Samuel Worrall gentleman, Holles Sanders accountant, Cradlock Wright accountant, and Albin Wheeler accountant; being all the persons I can learn to be /

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be any ways liable to be proceeded against on account of
the death of the said William Fudge.

All which is most humbly submitted to His Majesty's
Royal Wisdom.

D. Ryder

29th June, 1753.

Petition of the Company of Barbers and Surgeons to the King.

S.P.Dom. 35/2.

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty.

The Humble Petition of the Masters or Governors and Assistants Livery and Freemen of the Company of Barbers and Surgeons of London.

Most humbly sheweth

That your Petitioners were incorporated by Act of Parliament in the 32nd year of the reign of your Majesty's Royal Predecessor King Henry the Eighth in which Act amongst other Privileges it was granted unto your Petitioners that they and their successors should yearly for ever after at their free liberty and pleasure have and take without contradiction four persons condemned and put to death for felons by the Laws of this Realm for anatomies without further suit to the King's Highness, his Heirs or Successors for the same and to dissert the said dead bodies for their better instruction and experience in the faculty of surgery.

That your Petitioners from the time of passing the said Act till very lately though at a very great expense have quietly enjoyed this privilege to the great improvement of themselves and others in the said Act of Surgery and more particularly in the science of Anatomy.

That within four years last past great numbers of disorderly and riotous persons have frequently assembled themselves at the place of execution and with open violence forced away the dead bodies from your Petitioners' Beadles, although assisted by the Sheriff of the County in the obtaining your Petitioners' right and particularly at the last public execution several of your Majesty's Guards surrounded the gallows and threatened the life of your Petitioners' Officer in case he offered to carry away any of the said dead bodies but who such persons were or to what regiment they belonged your Petitioners have not as yet been able to discern.

That your Petitioners have prosecuted sundry of the said rioters at law from time to time but it is so very difficult for your Petitioners to find out the means and places /

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places of abode of the persons who thus interrupt them and such Prosecutions are attended with so great an expence to your Petitioners that your Petitioners cannot hope to suppress this growing evil effectually by any method within their own power.

That as your Petitioners do employ a great part of their time in your Majesty's service with the utmost pleasure and without any reward by examining all the surgeons and mates who serve on board your Majesty's Fleet and viewing their chests of medicines and instruments as also by viewing all such officers as are wounded in fight at sea for superannuation and for that it will be a certain benefit to your Majesty's Subject that this Law relating to your Petitioners should have its due and constant effect.

Your Petitioners do most humbly pray that your Majesty will be most graciously pleased to permit to direct that a File or two of Your Majesty's Foot Guards shall upon your Petitioner's Application to the Commanding Officer attend the public executions from time to time to see that as interruption be given to your Petitioner's Beadle in the taking away so many dead bodies yearly as are granted to your Petitioners by the said Act of Parliament or otherwise to relieve your Petitioners in such manner as your Majesty in your most gracious wisdom and condesension shall think fit.

S. Legge Esq. to Viscount Townshend.

S.P.Dom. 35/32.

Norwich Aug. 30, 1722.

My Lord,

Though I am a private person and one who have nothing to do in the government of this City yet I cannot help thinking it the duty of every Englishman to contribute what he may towards the welfare and advantage of the nation; and I think nobody does it so effectually as he who promotes the interest and secures the establishment of the Royal Family and the present administration. In pursuance of this opinion I thought myself obliged to give your Lordship an account of the state of this City in the present juncture of affairs when there is so much occasion to suspect a conspiracy in some parts of the nation. Your Lordship was informed, I believe, of the disorders at a late election of an Alderman and I think the Mayor received a letter from your Lordship concerning it. Since that time the City has been one continued riot occasioned by the zealous endeavours of the disaffected party of malcontents to establish the power of their faction and, right or wrong, to choose a Sheriff for the ensuing year of their own principles. The mob have been insufferably insolent and spirited up by men of the first rank. Amongst other gentlemen and substantial tradesmen you might see Counsellor Workhouse and Counsellor Gurden two young lawyers in all the gaiety of a birthnight dress hurrying at the head of several hundreds of the mob and making interest for the electing a Sheriff of their disaffected party whilst their followers were continually crying out Down with the Hanoverians, Rochester for Ever, with such expressions peculiar to the mob who are prejudiced in the favour of the Bishop of Rochester and his proceedings and who in all appearance are ripe for rebellion and want nothing but a head to lead them forth. Nay! they have already put up papers publicly with a prayer for the Pretender and of the fellows who were made Freemen lately being tended the Oath of Abjuration positively refused it; and yet his party with an Alderman at their head interceded to the Mayor to grant his freedom in order to vote for sheriff. Indeed the Mayor refused it. On Tuesday past came on the election for Sheriff and the disaffected party obtained their wish by a majority 1401 to 1377 and have ever since been rioting /

rioting about streets with drums and trumpets, firing of guns and calling out for Rochester. However there will be a scrutiny of the vote and we hope to find a just majority on the side of the Whigs notwithstanding the present appearance. If not, it will give such a turn to the constitution of the City as will not easily be helped without taking away the Charter and granting it on another foot (viz) by confirming the present Court of Aldermen who have a majority firmly in the interest of the present government and granting to them a power to choose 60 Common Council Men who shall remain so for life and that for the future the Mayor and Sheriffs shall be annually choosen by a majority of the said Court of Aldermen and Common Council Men assembled together; and at the decease of any Alderman or Common Council man another shall be choosen by the majority of the Said Assembly.

We want a man at the head of our Company of Artillery to act the part of Captain Hall. The gentleman who now commands it is most certainly a friend to the Government and of unspoiled loyalty, but he has too much of the tradesman. He wants an active spirit, a daring soul. A man who would search out the secrets of a treacherous crew and force a rebellious city into obedience must not tremble at losing a gallon of blood or shrink at feeling his throat cut.

I have nothing in view, my Lord, but serving my Country and I hope your Lordship will not interpret anything I have said to the disadvantage of

Your Lordship's most humble servant,
S. Legge.

Mr. Hasledine to the Dean of Lincoln

S.P.Dom 35/63.

Good Mr. Dean,

I return your many thanks for your last kind letter. I obliged Mr. Omier with your stables who ordered me to present his humble service and thanks. This day sennet I went out of town to collect some rents for the audit (which is not yet finished) and did not get home till Monday night. On Monday about eleven o'clock a mob came out of the City about 50 in number which Mr. Carrington had notice of before they came, and shut all the gates against them, they broke Pottery Gate open but upon Captain Townall's reading the Proclamation they dispersed themselves but the gates were guarded all that night by the workmen and others with fire-arms; this happened upon the occasion of taking down the Spires. We had got about four tons and half of lead off from Great Tom Spire, I went down on Tuesday morning to Mr. Mayor and the Aldermen with Mr. Gibb's and Mr. James' directions and opinions about the Spires and other repairs, showed them what was to be done at the West Towers instead of the Spires but all signified very little towards persuading them of the necessity of the proceedings. However, they promised as much as in them lay to suppress all tumultuous meetings for the future but still we heard from everybody that a great meeting by the town and county on Friday would certainly be to murder me, pull down my house and Mr. Carrington's for being chiefly concerned and every body was very apprehensive of danger from the next mobs, and Mr. Subdean and Chancellor after long consultation about the matter agreed to send word down hill to Mr. Mayor again in the evening on Tuesday to acquaint him (that he might prevent any further rising) that the Spires should stand till some further public satisfaction could be given of the necessity of taking down etc., which message I carried about half an hour after 5 o'clock and before I returned the streets were so full I could scarce pass. I pacified them in some measure by acquainting them with the message I had delivered to the Mayor, notwithstanding they came up till soon after six o'clock by a moderate computation 500 and would have assurance from Mr. Carrington which he gave them and something to drink next. I compounded for these half-crowns. They then went to Mr. Dean and Subdean and got half a guinea off each of them. They went down hill, broke some windows of several Presbyterians and then some went to bed, others to the /

the Ale house, which money the had raised kept some of them up all night and next day they took a civil round to ask money of several. Since which time we have had no disturbances, but yesterday in great fear notwithstanding, Mr. Chancellor and Subdean had ordered the breach in the Spire to be repaired which was actually begun otherwise I certainly believed a great deal of mischief had been done and I was told on Friday by some country people they had notice to come in to assist a keeping up the Church and pulling down the houses. They had a notion soldiers were sent for to withstand them till the Spires were down but everywhere they were scowering up their guns and swords to face any forces should be sent for that purpose. My humble duty and service attend you

H. Hasledine.

Sept. 24th, 1726.

Viscount Townshend to the Mayor of Lincoln.

S.P.Dom. 35/63.

Whitehall 22 Oct. 1726.

Sir,

His Majesty having been acquainted with the great riots and tumults that have happened in your town on the 19th of last month and the two days following on occasion of some repairs which the Dean and Chapter of your Cathedral are making to their church, has commanded me to express to you His Concern at these disorderly proceedings and there being apprehensions that they will be renewed, I am to signify to you His Majesty's Pleasure that you and the other Magistrates of your Corporation do not only make strict enquiry into the authors, promoters and ringleaders of these riots in order to their being brought to justice but that you also take all proper care for the preservation of the peace in which his Majesty expects that you will employ your utmost attention and vigilance and that you will send me for His Majesty's information an account of your proceedings therein.

I am etc.
Townshend.

Mayor of Lincoln.

The Mayor of Lincoln to Viscount Townshend.

S.P.Dom. 35/63.

My Lord,

Having received a letter from your Lordship relating to the riots and disorders lately happening about the pulling down of the Spire of the Cathedral Church of Lincoln, in obedience thereto all possible enquiry shall immediately be made into the authors and ringleaders of those riots and as speedy an account thereto given to your Lordship as may be.

I am etc.

Hezekiah Brown, Mayor.

Lincoln 24th October 1726.

The Mayor and Aldermen of Lincoln to Viscount Townshend.

S.P.Dom. 35/63.

Lincoln 29th October, 1726.

May it please your Lordship,

In obedience to your Lordship's Command (received the Twenty fourth of this Instant) we humbly beg leave to lay before your Lordship the nature and occasion of the late disorder here with our proceedings thereupon.

Upon the nineteenth day of September last past a disturbance there was made by some of the lowest rank of people caused (as we believe) by the beginning to pull down the Great Spire of the Cathedral.

Upon the first beginning to assemble they were dispersed by the then Mayor and they going (unknown to him) to the close of Lincoln (which is out of the Liberty of the City) they were again dispersed by Mr. Pownall (a Justice of the Peace of the County at large) and we had not the least expectation of any further trouble from them. But the day following they assembled (near seven of the clock at night) about the Close, which as they appeared in small numbers and without noise while as they appeared in small numbers and without noise while they were within the City no care of the Magistrates could prevent when being made sensible by some of the gentlemen of the church that the Spires should not be taken down they again retired without any seeming discontent, and have been quiet ever since.

We are using our utmost diligence to discover the ringleaders in order to bring them to justice, in which we have found more difficulty than might be expected from the unwillingness of those concerned to inform and give evidence against their fellows, and they are universally of so low condition as not to be known to ourselves.

We have likewise taken all possible care to prevent any further disorder by giving strict charge to all chief and petty constables within our jurisdiction to keep strict watch (especially upon charges of public rejoicing) and personally to give orders to all housekeepers and masters of family to have /

have a careful eye over their servants and apprentices as such, for whom we expected they should be answerable, and we have done and shall ever continue to do everything in our power that is proper for the keeping of His Majesty's Peace.

We cannot learn that any person of character or figure or so much as any tradesman or shopkeeper was concerned in this unhappy affair, or that one word was uttered disrespectful to His Majesty or his Government, and we hope and verily believe the whole disorder is at an end and that any renewal thereof (which your Lordship seems to apprehend) will be prevented. To which we shall contribute our utmost endeavours as becomes His Majesty's most dutiful subjects.

We are etc.,

- Hez. Brown Mayor
- Geo. Bracebridge Alderman
- Rob. Hobman Alderman
- Jas. Cook Alderman
- George Kent Alderman
- Jas. Lokey Alderman
- Robert Atkinson Alderman
- Jas. Dwance Alderman
- Jas. Ward Alderman.

The Bishop of Lincoln to Viscount Townshend.

S.P.Dom. 35/63.

My Lord,

I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship copies of the surveys made by Mr. James and Mr. Gibbs together with my letter to the Mayor of Lincoln on account of the late riot there.

The part I took in the Article of Repairs was to give my help toward raising the necessary provisions for that necessary work, and then to leave the conduct of the work to the Dean and Chapter. Earnest I was to see an advance made upon this good work, but how it was to be done rested with the Dean and Chapter whose legal charge it was. They determined to proceed according to the directions of their surveyors, and I thought they determined wisely, and approved their determination. And this is so thoroughly understood at Lincoln and the parts adjacent that I might well have considered myself as unconcerned in the late disorders there, had they not affected the peace and honour of the Government for the preservation and maintenance of which I must always think myself most nearly concerned.

As to the origin and design of the disorders, though all further approaches towards a full discovery of them are now very strictly guarded, yet I think I have, since my former letter, traced them a little further and am further confirmed in my first opinion that 'twas not a Lincoln but a Lincolnshire Riot, encouraged by the successes of former riots (of those particularly that have been in the neighbouring fens) and managed by malcontents, seemingly to express zeal for the church, but really and truly to make show of their disaffection to the state.

One of my agents informs me that Mr. Kent the last year's Mayor at Lincoln had the stoutness to say in his hearing and after the reading of your Lordship's Letter, "that the people would rise 20 miles around in defence of their Spires and that the gentlemen of the county were for preserving their spires." The same agent likewise informs me that there had been an Association or Combination of the Rioters in writing as friends had been assured by one who had been invited but refused to sign.

He /

He informs me also that the Magistrates were willing to have shifted off the rise and encouragement of this mob from themselves and their City to another set of men and sent thereupon a rude message to them; but as I believe the imputation to be slanderous, so I shall not spread the slander by naming any of those men.

Mr. Hobbins of Holbeach, a Justice of the Peace, who had been and is still concerned in prosecuting the Spalding Rioters, hath this hour made me his first visit on his way down to London. He thinks of the rioters as I do, that whatever their particular pretences may be, as occasions turn up, their general design is one and the same, viz. to disquiet the Government and show their disaffection to it. He had formerly a Commission in the Army, but is now a Barrister or Student in the Law at Lincoln's Inn, and seems to be an honest and sensible man. Should it be your Lordship's pleasure to enquire further concerning the state of the county from him, he is to be found at Will's Coffee House near Lincoln's Inn back gate, and is perfectly qualified to give a full account of the present disposition of the county.

I am etc.
R. Lincoln.

Bugden Nov. 1, 1726.